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THE  
POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE.



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THE  
POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE:

OR,

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE NATIONS OF EUROPE  
CONSIDERED IN ITS ASSOCIATION WITH NATURAL  
SCENERY AND NATIONAL CHARACTER.

BY

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*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR.*

LONDON  
GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD  
1905

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## PREFATORY NOTES.

OF this work Mr. RUSKIN says in his Autobiography :—“ The idea had come into my head in the summer of '37, and, I imagine, rose immediately out of my sense of the contrast between the cottages of Westmoreland and those of Italy. Anyhow, the November number of Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* for 1837 opens with 'Introduction to the Poetry of Architecture ; or The Architecture of the Nations of Europe considered in its Association with Natural Scenery and National Character,' by Kata Phusin. I could not have put in fewer, or more inclusive words, the definition of what half my future life was to be spent in discoursing of ; while the *nom-de-plume* I chose, 'ACCORDING TO NATURE,' was equally expressive of the temper in which I was to discourse alike on that, and every

other subject. The adoption of a *nom-de-plume* at all implied (as also the concealment of name on the first publication of 'Modern Painters') a sense of a power of judgment in myself, which it would not have been becoming in a youth of eighteen to claim. . . ."

"As it is, these youthful essays, though deformed by assumption, and shallow in contents, are curiously right up to the points they reach; and already distinguished above most of the literature of the time, for the skill of language, which the public at once felt for a pleasant gift in me." (*Præterita*, vol. I. chap. 12.)

In a paper on "My First Editor," written in 1878, Mr. Ruskin says of these essays that they "contain sentences nearly as well put together as any I have done since."

The Conductor of the *Architectural Magazine* in reviewing the year's work said (December, 1838):—"One series of papers, commenced in the last volume and concluded in the present one, we consider to be of particular value to the young architect. We allude to the 'Essays on the Poetry of Architecture,' by

Kata Phusin. These essays will afford little pleasure to the mere builder, or to the architect who has no principle of guidance but precedent; but for such readers they were never intended. They are addressed to the young and unprejudiced artist; and their great object is to induce him to think and to exercise his reason. . . . There are some, we trust, of the rising generation, who are able to free themselves from the trammels and architectural bigotry of Vitruvius and his followers; and it is to such alone that we look forward for any real improvement in architecture as an art of design and taste."

The essays are in two parts: the first describing the cottages of England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, and giving hints and directions for picturesque cottage-building. The second part treats of the villas of Italy and England—with special reference to Como and Windermere; and concludes with a discussion of the laws of artistic composition, and practical suggestions of interest to the builders of country-houses.

It was the Author's original intention to

have proceeded from the cottage and the villa to the higher forms of Architecture ; but the Magazine to which he contributed was brought to a close shortly after the completion of his chapters on the villa, and his promise of farther studies was not redeemed until ten years later, by the publication of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, and still more completely in *The Stones of Venice*.

Other papers contributed by Mr. Ruskin to the same Magazine, on Perspective, and on the proposed monument to Sir Walter Scott at Edinburgh, are not included in this volume, as they do not form any part of the series on the Poetry of Architecture.

The essays were first collected in book form by an American publisher in 1873. Some years ago Mr. Ruskin intended to publish them in England, but hesitated on account of the poverty of the old magazine illustrations, which were inferior woodcuts,—mere libels on his original sketches. But now that so many of Mr. Ruskin's early drawings have been published in photogravure facsimile, this objection is not nearly so



weighty as it used to be. In this edition, therefore, a few of the old cuts, necessary to the text, are reproduced, and some are replaced by engravings from sketches by the Author. It is much to be regretted that the original of the Coniston Hall (fig. 8; p. 101 of this work) has disappeared, and that the Author's youthful record of a scene so familiar to him in later years should be represented only by the harsh lines of Mr. Loudon's engraver.

The text is carefully reprinted from the *Architectural Magazine*. A few additional notes are distinguished by square brackets.

THE EDITOR.



# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I

## *PART I.—THE COTTAGE.*

I. THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ENGLAND AND FRANCE	II
II. THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ITALY . . . .	26
III. THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—SWITZERLAND . .	46
IV. THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—WESTMORELAND .	67
V. A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS . . . . .	88
VI. THE COTTAGE—CONCLUDING REMARKS . . .	114

## *PART II.—THE VILLA.*

I. THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO . . .	129
II. THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO (CON- TINUED) . . . . .	153
III. THE ITALIAN VILLA (CONCLUDED) . . . .	179
V. THE LOWLAND VILLA—ENGLAND . . . .	200
V. THE ENGLISH VILLA—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSI- TION . . . . .	219

	PAGE
VI. THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION. (THE CULTIVATED, OR BLUE COUNTRY, AND THE WOODED, OR GREEN COUNTRY) .	244
VII. THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION. (THE HILL, OR BROWN COUNTRY) .	278
INDEX . . . . .	329

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR.

Old House at the end of Market Street, Croydon	
	<i>Frontispiece</i>
An Italian Village (Photogravure) . . .	<i>facing page 32</i>
Windows at Naples, 1841 . . .	,, 34
Cottage near La Cité, Val d'Aosta, 1838 . . .	,, 39
Houses and Cathedral Spire, Ulm, 1835 (Photogravure) . . . . .	,, 109
On the Reuss below Lucerne (Photogravure)	,, 120
Looking to Lago Maggiore from Vogogna, 1846 . . . . .	,, 138
At Naples, 1841 (Photogravure) . . .	,, 162
At Chambéry . . . . .	,, 177
Bay of Naples, 1841 . . . . .	,, 191
Vercelli, 1846 . . . . .	,, 248
Nice, 1840 (Photogravure) . . . . .	,, 265
Zug, 1835 . . . . .	,, 272
An Alpine Chapel . . . . .	,, 284
Woodwork and Vine, Abbeville (Photo- gravure) . . . . .	,, 320

	ON PAGE
Fig. 1.—Old Windows; from an early sketch by the Author . . . . .	23
Fig. 2.—Italian Cottage Gallery, 1846 . . . . .	37
Fig. 3.—Swiss Cottage, 1837 (reproduced from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	51
Fig. 4.—Cottage near Altorf, 1835 (Woodcut) . . . . .	55
Fig. 5.—Swiss Châlet Balcony, 1842 . . . . .	61
Fig. 6.—The Highest House in England, at Malham (Woodcut) . . . . .	81
Fig. 7.—Chimneys. (Eighteen sketches re-drawn from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	95
Fig. 8.—Coniston Hall, from the Lake near Brant- wood, 1837. (Reproduced from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	101
Fig. 9.—Chimney at Neuchatel; Dent du Midi and Mont Blanc in the distance . . . . .	111
Fig. 10.—Petrarch's Villa; Arquà, 1837. (Re-drawn from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	187
Fig. 11.—Broken Curves. (Three diagrams, re-drawn from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	195
Fig. 12.—Old English Mansion, 1837. (Reproduced from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	213
Fig. 13.—Windows. (Three designs, reproduced from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ) . . . . .	239
Fig. 14.—Leading Lines of Villa-Composition. (Dia- gram re-drawn from the <i>Architectural Magazine</i> ). . . . .	313

## INTRODUCTION.

I. THE Science of Architecture, followed out to its full extent, is one of the noblest of those which have reference only to the creations of human minds. It is not merely a science of the rule and compass, it does not consist only in the observation of just rule, or of fair proportion : it is, or ought to be, a science of feeling more than of rule, a ministry to the mind, more than to the eye. If we consider how much less the beauty and majesty of a building depend upon its pleasing certain prejudices of the eye, than upon its rousing certain trains of meditation in the mind, it will show in a moment how many intricate questions of feeling are involved in the raising of an edifice ; it will convince us of the truth of a proposition, which might at first have appeared startling, that no man can be an architect, who is not a metaphysician.

2. To the illustration of the department of this noble science which may be designated the Poetry of Architecture, this and some future articles will be dedicated. It is this peculiarity of the art which constitutes its nationality; and it will be found as interesting as it is useful, to trace in the distinctive characters of the architecture of nations, not only its adaptation to the situation and climate in which it has arisen, but its strong similarity to, and connection with, the prevailing turn of mind by which the nation who first employed it is distinguished.

3. I consider the task I have imposed upon myself the more necessary, because this department of the science, perhaps regarded by some who have no ideas beyond stone and mortar as chimerical, and by others who think nothing necessary but truth and proportion as useless, is at a miserably low ebb in England. And what is the consequence? We have Corinthian columns placed beside pilasters of no order at all, surmounted by monstrosified pepper-boxes, Gothic in form and Grecian in detail, in a building nominally and peculiarly "National"; we have Swiss cottages, falsely



and calumniously so entitled, dropped in the brickfields round the metropolis ; and we have staring square-windowed, flat-roofed gentlemen's seats, of the lath and plaster, mock-magnificent, Regent's Park description, rising on the woody promontories of Derwentwater.

4. How deeply is it to be regretted, how much is it to be wondered at, that, in a country whose school of painting, though degraded by its system of meretricious colouring, and disgraced by hosts of would-be imitators of inimitable individuals, is yet raised by the distinguished talent of those individuals to a place of well-deserved honour ; and the studios of whose sculptors are filled with designs of the most pure simplicity, and most perfect animation ; the school of architecture should be so miserably debased !

5. There are, however, many reasons for a fact so lamentable. In the first place, the patrons of architecture (I am speaking of all classes of buildings, from the lowest to the highest), are a more numerous and less capable class than those of painting. The general public, and I say it with sorrow, because I know it from observation, have little to do with

the encouragement of the school of painting, beyond the power which they unquestionably possess, and unmercifully use, of compelling our artist to substitute glare for beauty. Observe the direction of public taste at any of our exhibitions. We see visitors at that of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, passing Tayler with anathemas and Lewis with indifference, to remain in reverence and admiration before certain amiable white lambs and water-lilies, whose artists shall be nameless. We see them, in the Royal Academy, passing by Wilkie, Turner and Callcott, with shrugs of doubt or of scorn, to fix in gazing and enthusiastic crowds upon kettles-full of witches, and His Majesty's ships so and so lying to in a gale, &c. &c. But these pictures attain no celebrity because the public admire them, for it is not to the public that the judgment is intrusted. It is by the chosen few, by our nobility and men of taste and talent, that the decision is made, the fame bestowed, and the artist encouraged.

6. Not so in architecture. There, the power is generally diffused. Every citizen may box himself up in as barbarous a tenement as suits his taste or inclination; the architect is his

vassal, and must permit him not only to criticise, but to perpetrate. The palace or the nobleman's seat may be raised in good taste, and become the admiration of a nation ; but the influence of their owner is terminated by the boundary of his estate : he has no command over the adjacent scenery, and the possessor of every thirty acres around him has him at his mercy. The streets of our cities are examples of the effects of this clashing of different tastes ; and they are either remarkable for the utter absence of all attempt at embellishment, or disgraced by every variety of abomination.

7. Again, in a climate like ours, those few who have knowledge and feeling to distinguish what is beautiful, are frequently prevented by various circumstances from erecting it. John Bull's comfort perpetually interferes with his good taste, and I should be the first to lament his losing so much of his nationality, as to permit the latter to prevail. He cannot put his windows into a recess, without darkening his rooms ; he cannot raise a narrow gable above his walls, without knocking his head against the rafters ; and, worst of all, he cannot do either, without being stigmatised by

the awful, inevitable epithet, of "a very odd man." But, though much of the degradation of our present school of architecture is owing to the want or the unfitness of patrons, surely it is yet more attributable to a lamentable deficiency of taste and talent among our architects themselves. It is true, that in a country affording so little encouragement, and presenting so many causes for its absence, it cannot be expected that we should have any Michael Angelo Buonarottis. The energy of our architects is expended in raising "neat" poorhouses, and "pretty" charity schools; and, if they ever enter upon a work of higher rank, economy is the order of the day: plaster and stucco are substituted for granite and marble; rods of splashed iron for columns of verd-antique; and in the wild struggle after novelty, the fantastic is mistaken for the graceful, the complicated for the imposing, superfluity of ornament for beauty, and its total absence for simplicity.

8. But all these disadvantages might in some degree be counteracted, all these abuses in some degree prevented, were it not for the slight attention paid by our architects to that branch of the art which I have above designated

as the Poetry of Architecture. All unity of feeling (which is the first principle of good taste) is neglected; we see nothing but incongruous combination: we have pinnacles without height, windows without light, columns with nothing to sustain, and buttresses with nothing to support. We have parish paupers smoking their pipes and drinking their beer under Gothic arches and sculptured niches; and quiet old English gentlemen reclining on crocodile stools, and peeping out of the windows of Swiss chalets.

9. I shall attempt, therefore, to endeavour to illustrate the principle from the neglect of which these abuses have arisen; that of unity of feeling, the basis of all grace, the essence of all beauty. We shall consider the architecture of nations as it is influenced by their feelings and manners, as it is connected with the scenery in which it is found, and with the skies under which it was erected; we shall be led as much to the street and the cottage as to the temple and the tower; and shall be more interested in buildings raised by feeling, than in those corrected by rule. We shall commence with the lower class of edifices, proceeding from the

roadside to the village, and from the village to the city; and, if we succeed in directing the attention of a single individual more directly to this most interesting department of the science of architecture, we shall not have written in vain.

*PART I.*

**The Cottage.**

THE LOWLAND COTTAGE :—ENGLAND, FRANCE, ITALY :

THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE :—SWITZERLAND AND WEST-  
MORELAND :

A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS :

AND CONCLUDING REMARKS ON COTTAGE-BUILDING.





THE  
POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE.

I.

THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ENGLAND AND  
FRANCE.

10. OF all embellishments by which the efforts of man can enhance the beauty of natural scenery, those are the most effective which can give animation to the scene, while the spirit which they bestow is in unison with its general character. It is generally desirable to indicate the presence of animated existence in a scene of natural beauty; but only of such existence as shall be imbued with the spirit, and shall partake of the essence, of the beauty, which, without it, would be dead. If our object, therefore, is to embellish a scene the character of which is peaceful and unpretending, we must not erect a building fit

for the abode of wealth or pride. However beautiful or imposing in itself, such an object immediately indicates the presence of a kind of existence unsuited to the scenery which it inhabits; and of a mind which, when it sought retirement, was unacquainted with its own ruling feelings, and which consequently excites no sympathy in ours: but, if we erect a dwelling which may appear adapted to the wants, and sufficient for the comfort, of a gentle heart and lowly mind, we have instantly attained our object: we have bestowed animation, but we have not disturbed repose.

11. It is for this reason that the cottage is one of the embellishments of natural scenery which deserve attentive consideration. It is beautiful always, and everywhere. Whether looking out of the woody dingle with its eye-like window, and sending up the motion of azure smoke between the silver trunks of aged trees; or grouped among the bright corn-fields of the fruitful plain; or forming grey clusters along the slope of the mountain side, the cottage always gives the idea of a thing to be beloved: a quiet life-giving voice, that is as peaceful as silence itself.

12. With these feelings, we shall devote some time to the consideration of the prevailing character, and national peculiarities, of European cottages. The principal thing worthy of observation in the lowland cottage of England is its finished neatness. The thatch is firmly pegged down, and mathematically levelled at the edges; and, though the martin is permitted to attach his humble domicile, in undisturbed security, to the eaves, he may be considered as enhancing the effect of the cottage, by increasing its usefulness, and making it contribute to the comfort of more beings than one. The whitewash is stainless, and its rough surface catches a side light as brightly as a front one: the luxuriant rose is trained gracefully over the window; and the gleaming lattice, divided not into heavy squares, but into small pointed diamonds, is thrown half open, as is just discovered by its glance among the green leaves of the sweet briar, to admit the breeze, that, as it passes over the flowers, becomes full of their fragrance. The light wooden porch breaks the flat of the cottage face by its projection; and a branch or two of wandering honeysuckle

spread over the low hatch. A few square feet of garden and a latched wicket, persuading the weary and dusty pedestrian, with expressive eloquence, to lean upon it for an instant and request a drink of water or milk, complete a picture, which, if it be far enough from London to be unspoiled by town sophistications, is a very perfect thing in its way.\* The ideas it awakens are agreeable, and the architecture is all that we want in such a situation. It is pretty and appropriate; and if it boasted of any other perfection, it would be at the expense of its propriety.

13. Let us now cross the Channel, and endeavour to find a country cottage on the other side, if we can; for it is a difficult matter. There are many villages; but such a thing as an isolated cottage is extremely rare. Let us try one or two of the green valleys among the chalk eminences which sweep from Abbeville to Rouen. Here is a cottage at last, and a picturesque one, which is more than we could say for the English domicile. What then is the difference? There

[\* Compare *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, I. § 16.]

is a general air of *nonchalance* about the French peasant's habitation, which is aided by a perfect want of everything like neatness; and rendered more conspicuous by some points about the building which have a look of neglected beauty, and obliterated ornament. Half of the whitewash is worn off, and the other half coloured by various mosses and wandering lichens, which have been permitted to vegetate upon it, and which, though beautiful, constitute a kind of beauty from which the ideas of age and decay are inseparable. The tall roof of the garret window stands fantastically out; and underneath it, where, in England, we had a plain double lattice, is a deep recess, flatly arched at the top, built of solid masses of grey stone, fluted on the edge; while the brightness of the glass within (if there be any) is lost in shade, causing the recess to appear to the observer like a dark eye. The door has the same character: it is also of stone, which is so much broken and disguised as to prevent it from giving any idea of strength or stability. The entrance is always open; no roses, or anything else, are wreathed about it; several outhouses, built in

the same style, give the building extent; and the group (in all probability, the dependency of some large old château in the distance) does not peep out of copse, or thicket, or a group of tall and beautiful trees, but stands comfortlessly between two individuals of the columns of long-trunked fac-simile elms, which keep guard along the length of the public road.

14. Now, let it be observed how perfectly, how singularly, the distinctive characters of these two cottages agree with those of the countries in which they are built; and of the people for whose use they are constructed. England is a country whose every scene is in miniature.\* Its green valleys are not wide; its dewy hills are not high; its forests are of no extent, or, rather, it has nothing that can pretend to a more sounding title than that of "wood." Its champaigns are minutely chequered into fields; we can never see far at a time; and there is a sense of something inexpressible, except by the truly English word "snug," in every quiet nook and sheltered

[\* Compare with this chapter, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 1.]

lane. The English cottage, therefore, is equally small, equally sheltered, equally invisible at a distance.

15. But France is a country on a large scale. Low, but long, hills sweep away for miles into vast uninterrupted champaigns; immense forests shadow the country for hundreds of square miles, without once letting through the light of day; its pastures and arable land are divided on the same scale; there are no fences; we can hardly place ourselves in any spot where we shall not see for leagues around; and there is a kind of comfortless sublimity in the size of every scene. The French cottage, therefore, is on the same scale, equally large and desolate looking; but we shall see, presently, that it can arouse feelings which, though they cannot be said to give it sublimity, yet are of a higher order than any which can be awakened at the sight of the English cottage.

16. Again, every bit of cultivated ground in England has a finished neatness; the fields are all divided by hedges or fences; the fruit trees are neatly pruned; the roads beautifully made, &c. Everything is the reverse in

France: the fields are distinguished by the nature of the crops they bear; the fruit trees are overgrown with moss and mistletoe; and the roads immeasurably wide, and miserably made.

17. So much for the character of the two cottages, as they assimilate with the countries in which they are found. Let us now see how they assimilate with the character of the people by whom they are built. England is a country of perpetually increasing prosperity and active enterprise; but, for that very reason, nothing is allowed to remain till it gets old. Large old trees are cut down for timber; old houses are pulled down for the materials; and old furniture is laughed at and neglected. Everything is perpetually altered and renewed by the activity of invention and improvement. The cottage, consequently, has no dilapidated look about it; it is never suffered to get old; it is used as long as it is comfortable, and then taken down and rebuilt; for it was originally raised in a style incapable of resisting the ravages of time. But, in France, there prevail two opposite feelings, both in the extreme; that of the



old pedigreed population, which preserves unlimitedly; and that of the modern revolutionists, which destroys unmercifully. Every object has partly the appearance of having been preserved with infinite care from an indefinite age, and partly exhibits the evidence of recent ill-treatment and disfiguration. Primeval forests rear their vast trunks over those of many younger generations growing up beside them; the château or the palace, showing, by its style of architecture, its venerable age, bears the marks of the cannon-ball, and, from neglect, is withering into desolation. Little is renewed: there is little spirit of improvement; and the customs which prevailed centuries ago are still taught by the patriarchs of the families to their grandchildren. The French cottage, therefore, is just such as we should have expected from the disposition of its inhabitants; its massive windows, its broken ornaments, its whole air and appearance, all tell the same tale of venerable age, respected and preserved, till at last its dilapidation wears an appearance of neglect.

18. Again, the Englishman will sacrifice everything to comfort, and will not only take

great pains to secure it, but he has generally also the power of doing so: for the English peasant is, on the average, wealthier than the French. The French peasant has no idea of comfort, and therefore makes no effort to secure it. The difference in the character of their inhabitants is, as we have seen, written on the fronts of their respective cottages. The Englishman is, also, fond of display; but the ornaments, exterior and interior, with which he adorns his dwelling, however small it may be, are either to show the extent of his possessions, or to contribute to some personal profit or gratification: they never seem designed for the sake of ornament alone. Thus, his wife's love of display is shown by the rows of useless crockery in her cupboard; and his own by the rose tree at the front door, from which he may obtain an early bud to stick in the buttonhole of his best blue coat on Sundays: the honeysuckle is cultivated for its smell, the garden for its cabbages. Not so in France. There, the meanest peasant, with an equal or greater love of display, embellishes his dwelling as much as lies in his power, solely for the gratification of his feeling of

what is agreeable to the eye. The gable of his roof is prettily shaped; the niche at its corner is richly carved; the wooden beams, if there be any, are fashioned into grotesque figures; and even the "air négligé" and general dilapidation of the building tell a thousand times more agreeably to an eye accustomed to the picturesque, than the spruce preservation of the English cottage.

19. No building which we feel to excite a sentiment of mere complacency can be said to be in good taste. On the contrary, when the building is of such a class, that it can neither astonish by its beauty, nor impress by its sublimity, and when it is likewise placed in a situation so uninteresting as to render something more than mere fitness or propriety necessary, and to compel the eye to expect something from the building itself, a gentle contrast of feeling in that building is exceedingly desirable; and if possible, a sense that something has past away, the presence of which would have bestowed a deeper interest on the whole scene. The fancy will immediately try to recover this, and, in the endeavour, will obtain the desired effect from an indefinite cause.

20. Now, the French cottage cannot please by its propriety, for it can only be adapted to the ugliness around ; and, as it ought to be, and cannot but be, adapted to this, it is still less able to please by its beauty. How, then, can it please ? There is no pretence to gaiety in its appearance, no green flower-pots in ornamental lattices ; but the substantial style of any ornaments it may possess, the recessed windows, the stone carvings, and the general size of the whole, unite to produce an impression of the building having once been fit for the residence of prouder inhabitants ; of its having once possessed strength, which is now withered, and beauty, which is now faded. This sense of something lost, something which has been, and is not, is precisely what is wanted. The imagination is set actively to work in an instant ; and we are made aware of the presence of a beauty, the more pleasing because visionary ; and, while the eye is pitying the actual humility of the present building, the mind is admiring the imagined pride of the past. Every mark of dilapidation increases this feeling ; while these very marks (the fractures of the stone, the lichens of the





Fig. 1. Old Windows : from an early sketch by the Author

mouldering walls, and the graceful lines of the sinking roof) are all delightful in themselves.

21. Thus, we have shown that, while the English cottage is pretty from its propriety, the French cottage, having the same connection with its climate, country, and people, produces such a contrast of feeling as bestows on it a beauty addressing itself to the mind, and is therefore in perfectly good taste. If we are asked why, in this instance, good taste produces only what every traveller feels to be not in the least striking, we reply that, where the surrounding circumstances are unfavourable, the very adaptation to them which we have declared to be necessary renders the building uninteresting; and that, in the next paper, we shall see a very different result from the operations of equally good taste in adapting a cottage to its situation, in one of the noblest districts of Europe. Our subject will be, the Lowland Cottage of North Italy.

## II.

### THE LOWLAND COTTAGE—ITALY.

“Most musical, most melancholy.”

22. LET it not be thought that we are unnecessarily detaining our readers from the proposed subject, if we premise a few remarks on the character of the landscape of the country we have now entered. It will always be necessary to obtain some definite knowledge of the distinctive features of a country, before we can form a just estimate of the beauties or the errors of its architecture. We wish our readers to imbue themselves as far as may be with the spirit of the clime which we are now entering; to cast away all general ideas; to look only for unison of feeling, and to pronounce everything wrong which is contrary to the *humours* of nature. We must make them feel where they are; we must throw a peculiar light and colour over their imaginations; then



we will bring their judgment into play, for then it will be capable of just operation.

23. We have passed, it must be observed (in leaving England and France for Italy), from comfort to desolation; from excitement to sadness: we have left one country prosperous in its prime, and another frivolous in its age, for one glorious in its death.

Now, we have prefixed the hackneyed line of *Il Penseroso* to our paper, because it is a definition of the essence of the beautiful. What is most musical, will always be found most melancholy; and no real beauty can be obtained without a touch of sadness. Whenever the beautiful loses its melancholy, it degenerates into prettiness. We appeal to the memories of all our observing readers, whether they have treasured up any scene, pretending to be more than pretty, which has not about it either a tinge of melancholy or a sense of danger; the one constitutes the beautiful, the other the sublime.

24. This postulate being granted, as we are sure it will by most (and we beg to assure those who are refractory or argumentative, that, were this a treatise on the sublime and

beautiful, we could convince and quell their incredulity to their entire satisfaction by innumerable instances), we proceed to remark here, once for all, that the principal glory of the Italian landscape is its extreme melancholy. It is fitting that it should be so: the dead are the nations of Italy; her name and her strength are dwelling with the pale nations underneath the earth; the chief and chosen boast of her utmost pride is the *hic jacet*; she is but one wide sepulchre, and all her present life is like a shadow or a memory. And therefore, or, rather, by a most beautiful coincidence, her national tree is the cypress; and whoever has marked the peculiar character which these noble shadowy spires can give to her landscape, lifting their majestic troops of waving darkness from beside the fallen column, or out of the midst of the silence of the shadowed temple and worshipless shrine, seen far and wide over the blue of the faint plain, without loving the dark trees for their sympathy with the sadness of Italy's sweet cemetery shore, is one who profanes her soil with his footsteps.

25. Every part of the landscape is in

unison ; the same glory of mourning is thrown over the whole ; the deep blue of the heavens is mingled with that of the everlasting hills, or melted away into the silence of the sapphire sea ; the pale cities, temple and tower, lie gleaming along the champaign ; but how calmly ! no hum of men ; no motion of multitude in the midst of them : they are voiceless as the city of ashes. The transparent air is gentle among the blossoms of the orange and the dim leaves of the olive ; and the small fountains, which, in any other land, would spring merrily along, sparkling and singing among tinkling pebbles, here flow calmly and silently into some pale font of marble, all beautiful with life, worked by some unknown hand, long ago nerveless, and fall and pass on among wan flowers, and scented copse, through cool leaf-lighted caves or grey Egerian grottos, to join the Tiber or Eridanus, to swell the waves of Nemi, or the Larian Lake. The most minute objects (leaf, flower, and stone), while they add to the beauty, seem to share in the sadness, of the whole.

26. But, if one principal character of Italian landscape is melancholy, another is elevation.

We have no simple rusticity of scene, no cowslip and buttercup humility of seclusion. Tall mulberry trees, with festoons of the luxuriant vine, purple with ponderous clusters, trailed and trellised between and over them, shade the wide fields of stately Indian corn; luxuriance of lofty vegetation (catalpa, and aloe, and olive), ranging itself in lines of massy light along the wan champaign, guides the eye away to the unfailing wall of mountain, Alp or Apennine; no cold long range of shivery grey, but dazzling light of snow, or undulating breadth of blue, fainter and darker, in infinite variety; peak, precipice, and promontory passing away into the wooded hills, each with its tower or white village sloping into the plain; castellated battlements cresting their undulations; some wide majestic river gliding along the champaign, the bridge on its breast, and the city on its shore; the whole canopied with cloudless azure, basking in mistless sunshine, breathing the silence of odoriferous air.

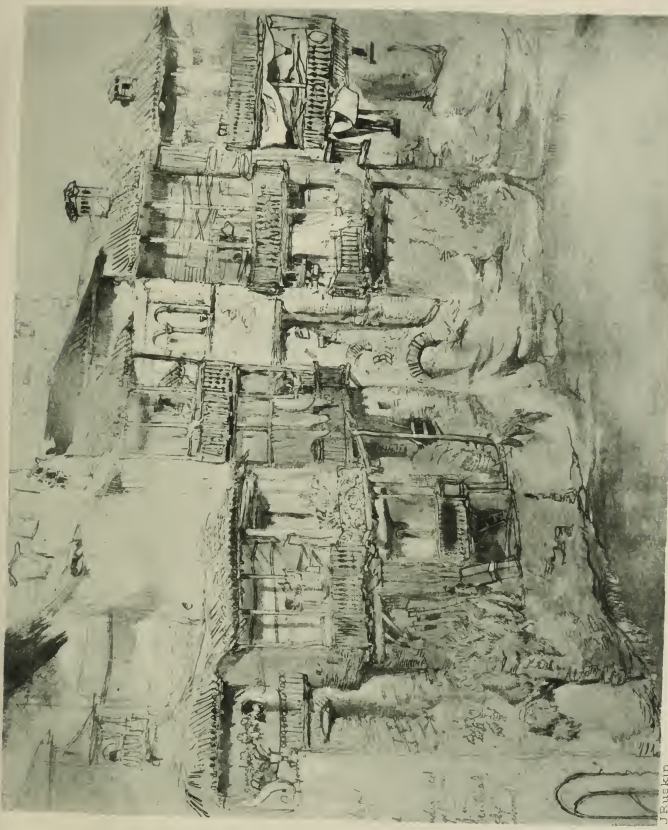
27. Now comes the question. In a country of this pomp of natural glory, tempered with melancholy memory of departed pride, what

are we to wish for, what are we naturally to expect in the character of her most humble edifices; those which are most connected with present life—least with the past? what are we to consider fitting or beautiful in her cottage?

We do not expect it to be comfortable, when every thing around it betokens decay and desolation in the works of man. We do not wish it to be neat, where nature is most beautiful, because neglected. But we naturally look for an elevation of character, a richness of design or form, which, while the building is kept a cottage, may yet give it a peculiar air of cottage aristocracy; a beauty (no matter how dilapidated) which may appear to have been once fitted for the surrounding splendour of scene and climate. Now, let us fancy an Italian cottage before us. The reader who has travelled in Italy will find little difficulty in recalling one to his memory, with its broad lines of light and shadow, and its strange, but not displeasing mixture of grandeur and desolation. Let us examine its details, enumerate its architectural peculiarities, and see how far it agrees with our

preconceived idea of what the cottage ought to be?

28. The first remarkable point of the building is the roof. It generally consists of tiles of very deep curvature, which rib it into distinct vertical lines, giving it a far more agreeable surface than that of our flatter tiling. The *form* of the roof, however, is always excessively flat, so as never to let it intrude upon the eye; and the consequence is, that, while an English village, seen at a distance, appears all red roof, the Italian is all white wall; and therefore, though always bright, is never gaudy. We have in these roofs an excellent example of what should always be kept in mind, that everything will be found beautiful, which climate or situation render useful. The strong and constant heat of the Italian sun would be intolerable if admitted at the windows; and, therefore, the edges of the roof project far over the walls, and throw long shadows downwards, so as to keep the upper windows constantly cool. These long oblique shadows on the white surface are always delightful, and are alone sufficient to give the building character. They are peculiar to the



J. Ruckin

Allen & Co. So.

An Italian Village

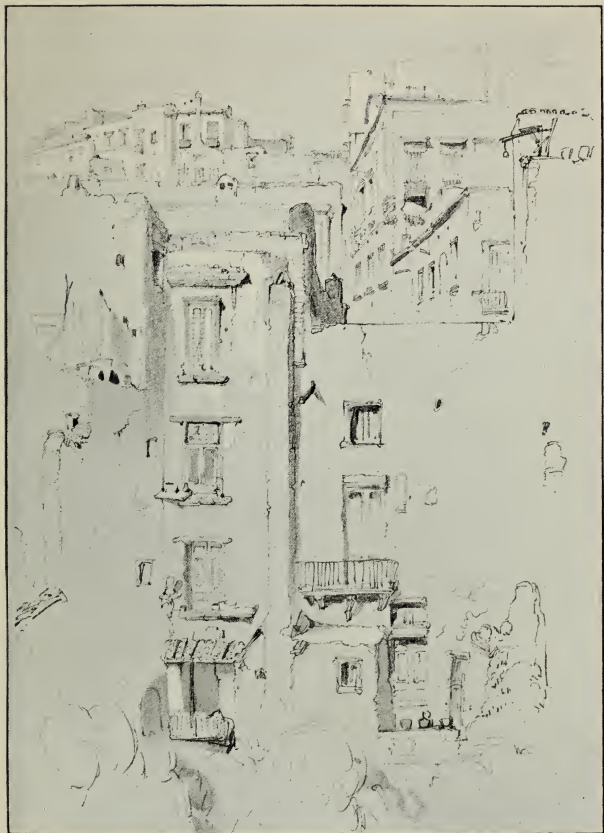




buildings of Spain and Italy; for owing to the general darker colour of those of more northerly climates, the shadows of their roofs, however far thrown, do not tell distinctly, and render them, not varied, but gloomy. Another ornamental use of these shadows is, that they break the line of junction of the wall with the roof: a point always desirable, and in every kind of building, whether we have to do with lead, slate, tile, or thatch, one of extreme difficulty. This object is farther forwarded in the Italian cottage, by putting two or three windows up under the very eaves themselves, which is also done for coolness, so that their tops are formed by the roof; and the wall has the appearance of having been terminated by large battlements and roofed over. And, finally, the eaves are seldom kept long on the same level: double or treble rows of tiling are introduced; long sticks and irregular woodwork are occasionally attached to them, to assist the festoons of the vine; and the graceful irregularity and marked character of the whole must be dwelt on with equal delight by the eye of the poet, the artist, or the unprejudiced architect. All, however,

is exceedingly humble; we have not yet met with the elevation of character we expected. We shall find it however as we proceed.

29. The next point of interest is the window. The modern Italian is completely owl-like in his habits. All the day time he lies idle and inert; but during the night he is all activity, but it is mere activity of inoccupation. Idleness, partly induced by the temperature of the climate, and partly consequent on the decaying prosperity of the nation, leaves indications of its influence on all his undertakings. He prefers patching up a ruin to building a house; he raises shops and hovels, the abodes of inactive, vegetating, brutish poverty, under the protection of aged and ruined, yet stalwart, arches of the Roman amphitheatre; and the habitations of the lower orders frequently present traces of ornament and stability of material evidently belonging to the remains of a prouder edifice. This is the case sometimes to such a degree as, in another country, would be disagreeable from its impropriety; but, in Italy, it corresponds with the general prominence of the features of a past age, and is always beautiful. Thus, the eye rests



J. Ruskin

Windows at Naples

1841

p. 34



with delight on the broken mouldings of the windows, and the sculptured capitals of the corner columns, contrasted, as they are, the one with the glassless blackness within, the other with the ragged and dirty confusion of drapery around. The Italian window, in general, is a mere hole in the thick wall, always well proportioned; occasionally arched at the top, sometimes with the addition of a little rich ornament: seldom, if ever, having any casement or glass, but filled up with any bit of striped or coloured cloth, which may have the slightest chance of deceiving the distant observer into the belief that it is a legitimate blind. This keeps off the sun, and allows a free circulation of air, which is the great object. When it is absent, the window becomes a mere black hole, having much the same relation to a glazed window that the hollow of a skull has to a bright eye; not unexpressive, but frowning and ghastly, and giving a disagreeable impression of utter emptiness and desolation within. Yet there is character in them: the black dots tell agreeably on the walls at a distance, and have no disagreeable sparkle to disturb the repose of

surrounding scenery. Besides, the temperature renders every thing agreeable to the eye, which gives it an idea of ventilation. A few roughly constructed balconies, projecting from detached windows, usually break the uniformity of the wall. In some Italian cottages there are wooden galleries, resembling those so frequently seen in Switzerland; but this is not a very general character, except in the mountain valleys of North Italy, although sometimes a passage is effected from one projecting portion of a house to another by means of an exterior gallery. These are very delightful objects; and when shaded by luxuriant vines, which is frequently the case, impart a gracefulness to the building otherwise unattainable.

30. The next striking point is the arcade at the base of the building. This is general in cities; and, although frequently wanting to the cottage, is present often enough to render it an important feature. In fact, the Italian cottage is usually found in groups. Isolated buildings are rare; and the arcade affords an agreeable, if not necessary, shade, in passing from one building to another. It is a still



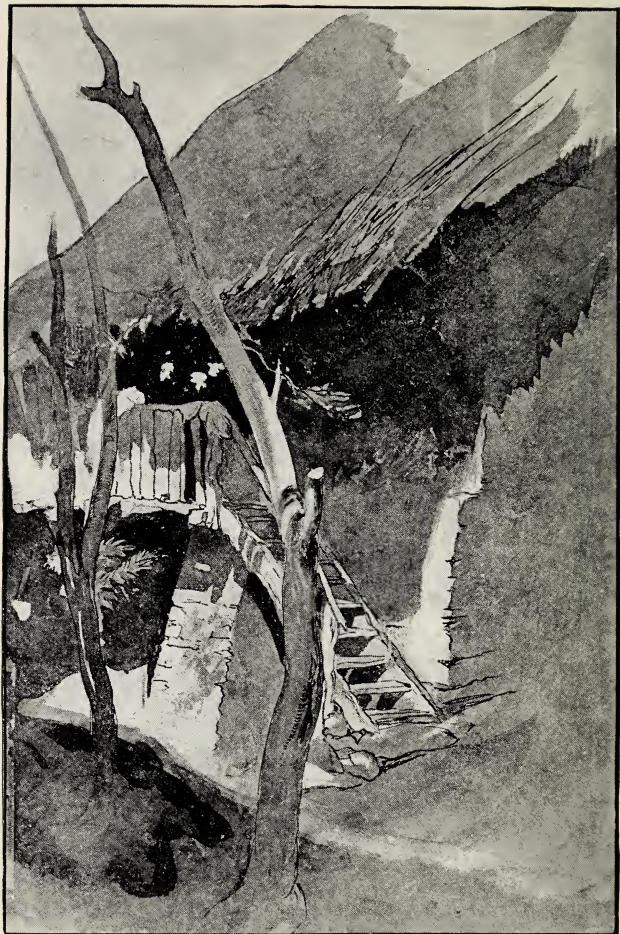
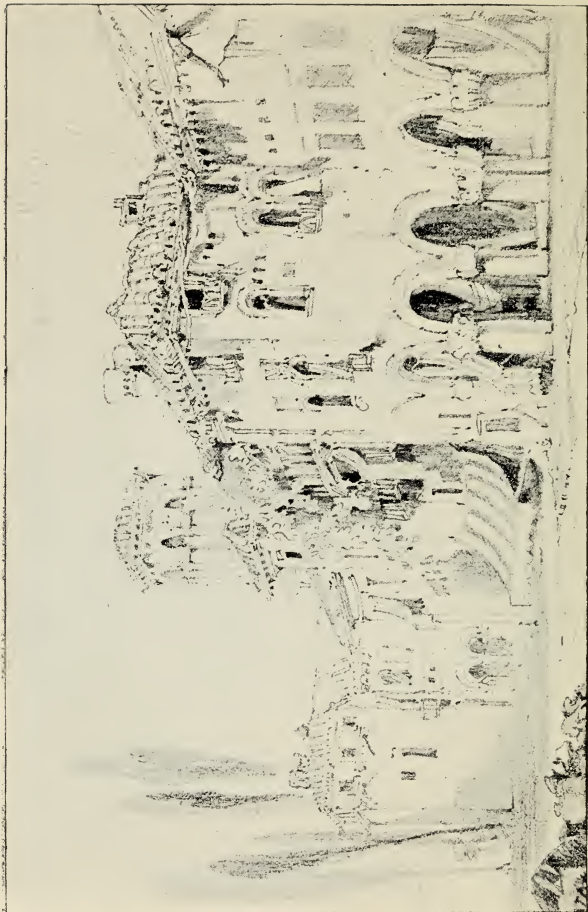


Fig. 2. Italian Cottage Gallery







J Ruskin

Cottage near La Cibé, Val d'Aosta

1848

p. 39

more unfailing feature of the Swiss city, where it is useful in deep snow. But the supports of the arches in Switzerland are generally square masses of wall, varying in size, separating the arches by irregular intervals, and sustained by broad and massy buttresses; while in Italy, the arches generally rest on legitimate columns, varying in height from one and a half to four diameters, with huge capitals, not unfrequently rich in detail. These give great gracefulness to the buildings in groups: they will be spoken of more at large when we are treating of arrangement and situation.

31. The square tower, rising over the roof of the farther cottage, will not escape observation. It has been allowed to remain, not because such elevated buildings ever belong to mere cottages, but, first, that the truth of the scene might not be destroyed;\* and, secondly, be-

\* The annexed illustration will, perhaps, make the remarks advanced more intelligible. The building, which is close to the city of Aosta, unites in itself all the peculiarities for which the Italian cottage is remarkable: the dark arcade, the sculptured capital, the vine-covered gallery, the flat and confused roof; and clearly exhibits the points to which we wish particularly to direct attention; namely, brightness of effect, simplicity of form, and elevation of character. Let it

cause it is impossible, or nearly so, to obtain a group of buildings of any sort, in Italy, without one or more such objects rising behind them, beautifully contributing to destroy the monotony, and contrast with the horizontal lines of the flat roofs and square walls. We think it right, therefore, to give the cottage the relief and contrast which, in reality, it possessed, even though we are at present speaking of it in the abstract.

32. Having now reviewed the distinctive parts of the Italian cottage in detail, we shall proceed to direct our attention to points of general character. I. Simplicity of form. The roof, being flat, allows of no projecting garret windows, no fantastic gable ends: the walls themselves are equally flat; no bow-windows or sculptured oriels, such as we meet with perpetually in Germany, France, or the Netherlands, vary their white fronts. Now, this

not be supposed, however, that such a combination of attributes is rare; on the contrary, it is common to the greater part of the cottages of Italy. This building has not been selected as a rare example, but it is given as a good one. [These remarks refer to a cut in the magazine text, represented in the illustrated edition by a photogravure from the original sketch.]

simplicity is, perhaps, the principal attribute by which the Italian cottage attains the elevation of character we desired and expected. All that is fantastic in form, or frivolous in detail, annihilates the aristocratic air of a building: it at once destroys its sublimity and size, besides awakening, as is almost always the case, associations of a mean and low character. The moment we see a gable roof, we think of cock-lofts; the instant we observe a projecting window of attics and tent-bedsteads. Now, the Italian cottage assumes, with the simplicity, *l'air noble* of buildings of a higher order; and, though it avoids all ridiculous miniature mimicry of the palace, it discards the humbler attributes of the cottage. The ornament it assumes is dignified; no grinning faces, or unmeaning notched planks, but well-proportioned arches, or tastefully sculptured columns. While there is nothing about it unsuited to the humility of its inhabitant, there is a general dignity in its air, which harmonizes beautifully with the nobility of the neighbouring edifices, or the glory of the surrounding scenery.

33. II. Brightness of effect. There are no

weather stains on the walls: there is no dampness in air or earth, by which they could be induced; the heat of the sun scorches away all lichens, and mosses and mouldy vegetation. No thatch or stonecrop on the roof unites the building with surrounding vegetation; all is clear, and warm, and sharp on the eye; the more distant the building, the more generally bright it becomes, till the distant village sparkles out of the orange copse, or the cypress grove, with so much distinctness as might be thought in some degree objectionable. But it must be remembered that the prevailing colour of the Italian landscape is blue; sky, hills, water, are equally azure: the olive, which forms a great proportion of the vegetation, is not green, but grey; the cypress and its varieties, dark and neutral, and the laurel and myrtle far from bright. Now, white, which is intolerable with green, is agreeably contrasted with blue; and to this cause it must be ascribed that the white of the Italian building is not found startling and disagreeable in the landscape. That it is not, we believe, will be generally allowed.

34. III. Elegance of feeling. We never can

prevent ourselves from imagining that we perceive in the graceful negligence of the Italian cottage, the evidence of a taste among the lower orders refined by the glory of their land, and the beauty of its remains. We have always had strong faith in the influence of climate on the mind, and feel strongly tempted to discuss the subject at length; but our paper has already exceeded its proposed limits, and we must content ourselves with remarking what will not, we think, be disputed, that the eye, by constantly resting either on natural scenery of noble tone and character, or on the architectural remains of classical beauty, must contract a habit of feeling correctly and tastefully; the influence of which, we think, is seen in the style of edifices the most modern and the most humble.

35. Lastly, Dilapidation. We have just used the term "graceful negligence": whether it be graceful, or not, is a matter of taste; but the uncomfortable and ruinous disorder and dilapidation of the Italian cottage is one of observation. The splendour of the climate requires nothing more than shade from the sun, and occasionally shelter from a violent

storm: the outer arcade affords them both; it becomes the nightly lounge and daily dormitory of its inhabitant, and the interior is abandoned to filth and decay. Indolence watches the tooth of Time with careless eye and nerveless hand. Religion, or its abuse, reduces every individual of the population to utter inactivity three days out of the seven; and the habits formed in the three regulate the four. Abject poverty takes away the power, while brutish sloth weakens the will; and the filthy habits of the Italian prevent him from suffering from the state to which he is reduced. The shattered roofs, the dark, confused, ragged windows, the obscure chambers, the tattered and dirty draperies, altogether present a picture which, seen too near, is sometimes revolting to the eye, always melancholy to the mind. Yet even this many would not wish to be otherwise. The prosperity of nations, as of individuals, is cold and hard-hearted, and forgetful. The dead die, indeed, trampled down by the crowd of the living; the place thereof shall know them no more, for that place is not in the hearts of the survivors for whose interest they have made way.



But adversity and ruin point to the sepulchre, and it is not trodden on ; to the chronicle, and it doth not decay. Who would substitute the rush of a new nation, the struggle of an awakening power, for the dreamy sleep of Italy's desolation, for her sweet silence of melancholy thought, her twilight time of everlasting memories ?

36. Such, we think, are the principal distinctive attributes of the Italian cottage. Let it not be thought that we are wasting time in the contemplation of its beauties ; even though they are of a kind which the architect can never imitate, because he has no command over time, and no choice of situation ; and which he ought not to imitate, if he could, because they are only locally desirable or admirable. Our object, let it always be remembered, is not the attainment of architectural data, but the formation of taste.

*Oct. 12, 1837.*

### III.

#### THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—SWITZERLAND.

37. IN the three instances of the lowland cottage which have been already considered, are included the chief peculiarities of style which are interesting or important. I have not, it is true, spoken of the carved oaken gable and shadowy roof of the Norman village ; of the black crossed rafters and fantastic proportions which delight the eyes of the German ; nor of the Moorish arches and confused galleries which mingle so magnificently with the inimitable fretwork of the grey temples of the Spaniard. But these are not peculiarities solely belonging to the cottage : they are found in buildings of a higher order, and seldom, unless where they are combined with other features. They are therefore rather to be considered, in future, as elements of street effect, than, now, as the peculiarities of independent buildings.

My remarks on the Italian cottage might, indeed, be applied, were it not for the constant presence of Moorish feeling, to that of Spain. The architecture of the two nations is intimately connected: modified, in Italy, by the state of the Roman; and, in Spain, by the fanciful creations of the Moor. When I am considering the fortress and the palace,\* I shall be compelled to devote a very large share of my attention to Spain; but for characteristic examples of the cottage, I turn rather to Switzerland and England. Preparatory, therefore, to a few general remarks on modern ornamental cottages, it will be instructive to observe the peculiarities of two varieties of the mountain cottage, diametrically opposite to each other in most of their features; one always beautiful, and the other frequently so.

38. First, for Helvetia. Well do I remember the thrilling and exquisite moment when first, first in my life (which had not been over long), I encountered, in a calm and shadowy dingle, darkened with the thick spreading of tall pines,

[\* That part, however, was not written, as the "Architectural Magazine" stopped running soon after the conclusion of Part II. "The Villa."]

and voiceful with the singing of a rock-encumbered stream, and passing up towards the flank of a smooth green mountain, whose swarded summit shone in the summer snow like an emerald set in silver; when, I say, I first encountered in this calm defile of the Jura, the unobtrusive, yet beautiful, front of the Swiss cottage. I thought it the loveliest piece of architecture I had ever had the felicity of contemplating; yet it was nothing in itself, nothing but a few mossy fir trunks, loosely nailed together, with one or two grey stones on the roof: but its power was the power of association; its beauty, that of fitness and humility.

39. How different is this from what modern architects erect, when they attempt to produce what is, by courtesy, called a Swiss cottage. The modern building known in Britain by that name has very long chimneys, covered with various exceedingly ingenious devices for the convenient reception and hospitable entertainment of soot, supposed by the innocent and deluded proprietor to be "meant for ornament." Its gable roof slopes at an acute angle, and terminates in an interesting and romantic

manner, at each extremity, in a tooth-pick. Its walls are very precisely and prettily plastered; and it is rendered quite complete by the addition of two neat little bow windows, supported on neat little mahogany brackets, full of neat little squares of red and yellow glass. Its door is approached under a neat little veranda, "uncommon green," and is flanked on each side by a neat little round table, with all its legs of different lengths, and by a variety of neat little wooden chairs, all very peculiarly uncomfortable, and amazingly full of earwigs: the whole being surrounded by a garden full of flints, burnt bricks, and cinders, with some water in the middle, and a fountain in the middle of it, which won't play; accompanied by some goldfish, which won't swim; and by two or three ducks, which will splash. Now, I am excessively sorry to inform the members of any respectable English family, who are making themselves uncomfortable in one of these ingenious conceptions, under the idea that they are living in a Swiss cottage, that they labour under a melancholy deception; and shall now proceed to investigate the peculiarities of the real building.

40. The life of a Swiss peasant is divided into two periods; that in which he is watching his cattle at their summer pasture on the high Alps,\* and that in which he seeks shelter from the violence of the winter storms in the most retired parts of the low valleys. During the first period, he requires only occasional shelter from storms of excessive violence; during the latter, a sufficient protection from continued inclement weather. The Alpine or summer cottage, therefore, is a rude log hut, formed of unsquared pine trunks, notched into each other at the corners. The roof being excessively flat, so as to offer no surface to the wind, is covered with fragments of any stone that will split easily, held on by crossing logs; which are in their turn kept down by masses of stone; the whole being generally sheltered behind some protecting rock, or resting against the slope of the mountain, so that, from one side, you may step upon the roof. That is the *châlet*. When well grouped, running along a slope of mountain side, these

\* I use the word Alp here, and in future, in its proper sense, of a high mountain pasture; not in its secondary sense, of a snowy peak.



FIG. 3. Swiss Cottage, 1837





huts produce a very pleasing effect, being never obtrusive (owing to the prevailing greyness of their tone), uniting well with surrounding objects, and bestowing at once animation and character.

41. But the winter residence, the Swiss cottage, properly so called, is a much more elaborate piece of workmanship. The principal requisite is, of course, strength: and this is always observable in the large size of the timbers, and the ingenious manner in which they are joined, so as to support and relieve each other, when any of them are severely tried. The roof is always very flat, generally meeting at an angle of  $155^{\circ}$ , and projecting from 5 ft. to 7 ft. over the cottage side, in order to prevent the windows from being thoroughly clogged up with snow. That this projection may not be crushed down by the enormous weight of snow which it must sometimes sustain, it is assisted by strong wooden supports (seen in Fig. 3), which sometimes extend half down the walls for the sake of strength, divide the side into regular compartments, and are rendered ornamental by grotesque carving. Every canton has its own window. That of

Uri, with its diamond wood-work at the bottom, is, perhaps, one of the richest. (See Fig. 4.) The galleries are generally rendered ornamental by a great deal of labour bestowed upon their wood-work. This is best executed in the canton of Berne. The door is always six or seven feet from the ground, and occasionally much more, that it may be accessible in snow; and is reached by an oblique gallery, leading up to a horizontal one, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. The base of the cottage is formed of stone, generally whitewashed. The chimneys must have a chapter to themselves; they are splendid examples of utility combined with ornament.

Such are the chief characteristics of the Swiss cottage, separately considered. I must now take notice of its effect in scenery.

42. When one has been wandering for a whole morning through a valley of perfect silence, where everything around, which is motionless, is colossal, and everything which has motion, resistless; where the strength and the glory of nature are principally developed in the very forces which feed upon her majesty; and where, in the midst of mightiness

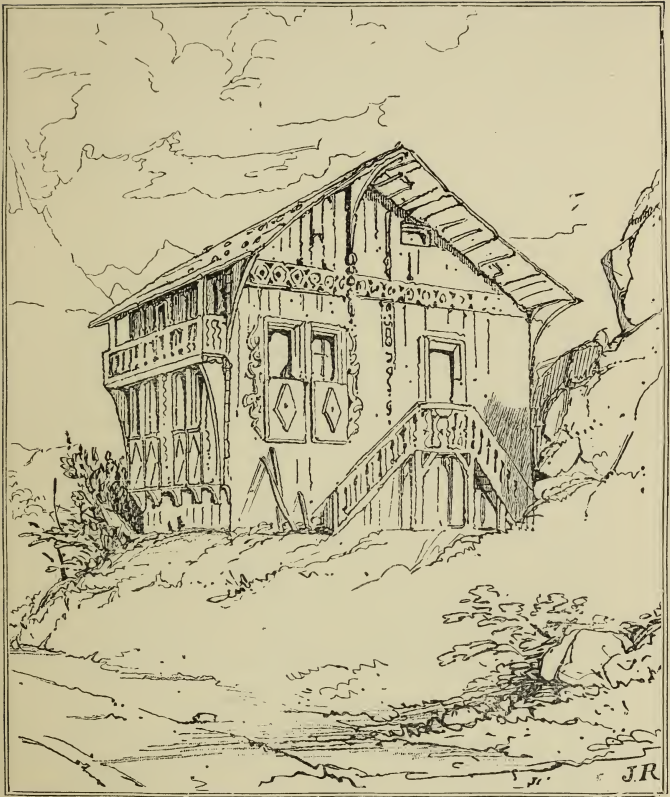


FIG. 4. Cottage near Altorf. 1835.



which seems imperishable, all that is indeed eternal is the influence of desolation; one is apt to be surprised, and by no means agreeably, to find, crouched behind some projecting rock, a piece of architecture which is neat in the extreme, though in the midst of wildness, weak in the midst of strength, contemptible in the midst of immensity. There is something offensive in its neatness: for the wood is almost always perfectly clean, and looks as if it had just been cut; it is consequently raw in its colour, and destitute of all variety of tone. This is especially disagreeable, when the eye has been previously accustomed to, and finds, everywhere around, the exquisite mingling of colour, and confused, though perpetually graceful, forms, by which the details of mountain scenery are peculiarly distinguished. Every fragment of rock is finished in its effect, tinted with thousands of pale lichens and fresh mosses; every pine tree is warm with the life of various vegetation; every grassy bank glowing with mellowed colour, and waving with delicate leafage. How, then, can the contrast be otherwise than painful, between this perfect loveliness,

and the dead, raw, lifeless surface of the deal boards of the cottage. Its weakness is pitiable; for, though there is always evidence of considerable strength on close examination, there is no *effect* of strength: the real thickness of the logs is concealed by the cutting and carving of their exposed surfaces; and even what is seen is felt to be so utterly contemptible, when opposed to the destructive forces which are in operation around, that the feelings are irritated at the imagined audacity of the inanimate object, with the self-conceit of its impotence; and, finally, the eye is offended at its want of size. It does not, as might be at first supposed, enhance the sublimity of surrounding scenery by its littleness, for it provokes no comparison; and there must be proportion between objects, or they cannot be compared. If the Parthenon, or the Pyramid of Cheops, or St. Peter's, were placed in the same situation, the mind would first form a just estimate of the magnificence of the building, and then be trebly impressed with the size of the masses which overwhelmed it. The architecture would not lose, and the crags would gain, by the juxtaposi-

tion; but the cottage, which must be felt to be a thing which the weakest stream of the Alps could toss down before it like a foam-globe, is offensively contemptible: it is like a child's toy let fall accidentally on the hill side; it does not unite with the scene; it is not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility and peace; but it draws attention upon itself by its pretension to decoration, while its decorations themselves cannot bear examination, because they are useless, unmeaning, and incongruous.

43. So much for its faults; and I have had no mercy upon them, the rather, because I am always afraid of being biassed in its favour by my excessive love for its sweet nationality. Now for its beauties. Wherever it is found, it always suggests ideas of a gentle, pure, and pastoral life.\* One feels that the peasants whose hands carved the planks so neatly, and adorned their cottage so industriously, and still preserve it so perfectly, and so neatly, can be no dull, drunken, lazy boors; one feels, also, that it requires both firm resolu-

[\* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. xi., and vol. v. chap. ix.]

tion, and determined industry, to maintain so successful a struggle against "the crush of thunder, and the warring winds." Sweet ideas float over the imagination of such passages of peasant life as the gentle Walton so loved; of the full milkpail, and the mantling cream-bowl; of the evening dance and the matin song; of the herdsmen on the Alps, of the maidens by the fountain; of all that is peculiarly and indisputably Swiss. For the cottage is beautifully national; there is nothing to be found the least like it in any other country. The moment a glimpse is caught of its projecting galleries, one knows that it is the land of Tell and Winkelried; and the traveller feels, that, were he indeed Swiss-born and Alp-bred, a bit of that carved plank, meeting his eye in a foreign land, would be as effectual as a note of the *Ranz des Vaches* upon the ear.

44. Again, when a number of these cottages are grouped together, they break upon each other's formality, and form a mass of fantastic proportion, of carved window and overhanging roof, full of character and picturesque in the extreme. An excellent example of this is the





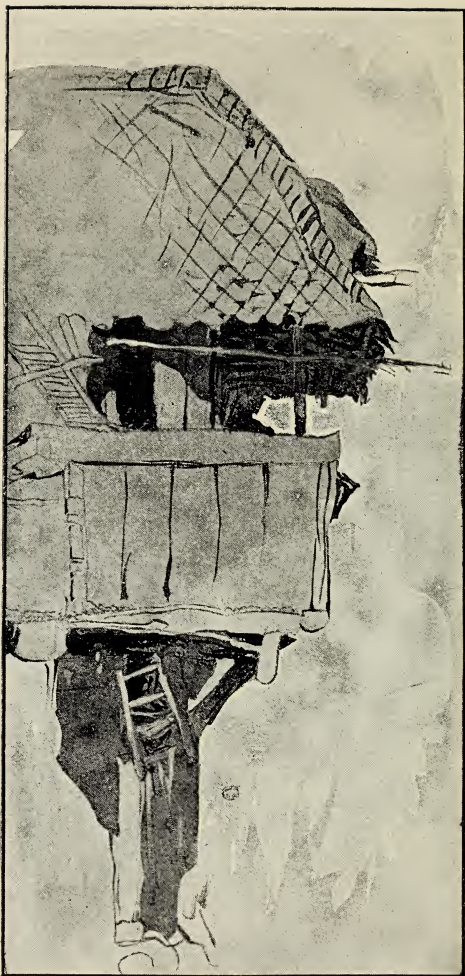


Fig. 5. Swiss Chalet Balcony

Bernese village of Unterseen. Again, when the ornament is not very elaborate, yet enough to preserve the character, and the cottage is old, and not very well kept (suppose in a Catholic canton), and a little rotten, the effect is beautiful: the timber becomes weather-stained, and of a fine warm brown, harmonizing delightfully with the grey stones on the roof, and the dark green of surrounding pines. If it be fortunate enough to be situated in some quiet glen, out of sight of the gigantic features of the scene, and surrounded with cliffs to which it bears some proportion; and if it be partially concealed, not intruding on the eye, but well united with everything around, it becomes altogether perfect; humble, beautiful, and interesting. Perhaps no cottage can then be found to equal it; and none can be more finished in effect, graceful in detail, and characteristic as a whole.

45. The ornaments employed in the decoration of the Swiss cottage do not demand much attention; they are usually formed in a most simple manner, by thin laths, which are carved into any fanciful form, or in which rows of holes are cut, generally diamond shaped; and

they are then nailed one above another to give the carving depth. Pinnacles are never raised on the roof, though carved spikes are occasionally suspended from it at the angles. No ornamental work is ever employed to disguise the beams of the projecting part of the roof, nor does any run along its edges. The galleries, in the canton of Uri, are occasionally supported on arched beams, as shown in Fig. 4, which have a very pleasing effect.

46. Of the adaptation of the building to climate and character, little can be said. When I called it "national," I meant only that it was quite *sui generis*, and, therefore, being only found in Switzerland, might be considered as a national building; though it has none of the mysterious connection with the mind of its inhabitants which is evident in all really fine edifices. But there is a reason for this; Switzerland has no climate, properly speaking, but an assemblage of every climate, from Italy to the Pole; the vine wild in its valleys, the ice eternal on its crags. The Swiss themselves are what we might have expected in persons dwelling in such a climate; they have no character. The sluggish

nature of the air of the valleys has a malignant operation on the mind; and even the mountaineers, though generally shrewd and intellectual, have no perceptible nationality: they have no language, except a mixture of Italian and bad German; they have no peculiar turn of mind; they might be taken as easily for Germans as for Swiss. No correspondence, consequently, can exist between national architecture and national character, where the latter is not distinguishable. Generally speaking, then, the Swiss cottage cannot be said to be built in good taste; but it is occasionally picturesque, frequently pleasing, and, under a favourable concurrence of circumstances, beautiful. It is not, however, a thing to be imitated; it is always, when out of its own country, incongruous; it never harmonizes with anything around it, and can therefore be employed only in mimicry of what does not exist, not in improvement of what does. I mean, that any one who has on his estate a dingle shaded with larches or pines, with a rapid stream, may manufacture a bit of Switzerland as a toy; but such imitations are always contemptible, and he cannot use the

Swiss cottage in any other way. A modified form of it, however, as will be hereafter shown, may be employed with advantage. I hope, in my next paper, to derive more satisfaction from the contemplation of the mountain cottage of Westmoreland, than I have been able to obtain from that of the Swiss.

## IV.

### THE MOUNTAIN COTTAGE—WESTMORELAND.

47. WHEN I devoted so much time to the consideration of the peculiarities of the Swiss cottage, I did not previously endeavour to ascertain what the mind, influenced by the feelings excited by the nature of its situation, would be induced to expect, or disposed to admire. I thus deviated from the general rule which I hope to be able to follow out; but I did so only because the subject for consideration was incapable of fulfilling the expectation when excited, or corresponding with the conception when formed. But now, in order to appreciate the beauty of the Westmoreland cottage, it will be necessary to fix upon a standard of excellence, with which it may be compared.

One of the principal charms of mountain scenery is its solitude. Now, just as silence is

never perfect or deep without motion, solitude is never perfect without some vestige of life. Even desolation is not felt to be utter, unless in some slight degree interrupted: unless the cricket is chirping on the lonely hearth, or the vulture soaring over the field of corpses, or the one mourner lamenting over the red ruins of the devastated village, that devastation is not felt to be complete. The anathema of the prophet does not wholly leave the curse of loneliness upon the mighty city, until he tells us that "the satyr shall dance there." And, if desolation, which is the destruction of life, cannot leave its impression perfect without some interruption, much less can solitude, which is only the absence of life, be felt without some contrast. Accordingly, it is, perhaps, never so perfect as when a populous and highly cultivated plain, immediately beneath, is visible through the rugged ravines, or over the cloudy summits of some tall, vast, and voiceless mountain.

48. When such a prospect is not attainable, one of the chief uses of the mountain cottage, paradoxical as the idea may appear, is to increase this sense of solitude. Now, as it will



only do so when it is seen at a considerable distance, it is necessary that it should be visible, or, at least, that its presence should be indicated, over a considerable portion of surrounding space. It must not, therefore, be too much shaded by trees, or it will be useless; but if, on the contrary, it be too conspicuous on the open hill side, it will be liable to most of the objections which were advanced against the Swiss cottage, and to another, which was not then noticed. Anything which, to the eye, is split into parts, appears less as a whole than what is undivided. Now, a considerable mass, of whatever tone or colour it may consist, is as easily divisible by dots as by lines; that is, a conspicuous point, on any part of its surface, will divide it into two portions, each of which will be individually measured by the eye, but which will never make the impression which they would have made, had their unity not been interrupted. A conspicuous cottage on a distant mountain side has this effect in a fatal degree, and is, therefore, always intolerable.

49. It should accordingly, in order to reconcile the attainment of the good, with the

avoidance of the evil, be barely visible: it should not tell as a cottage on the eye, though it should on the mind; for be it observed that, if it is only by the closest investigation that we can ascertain it to be a human habitation, it will answer the purpose of increasing the solitude quite as well as if it were evidently so; because this impression is produced by its appeal to the thoughts, not by its effect on the eye. Its colour, therefore, should be as nearly as possible that of the hill on which, or the crag beneath which, it is placed; its form, one that will incorporate well with the ground, and approach that of a large stone more than of anything else. The colour will consequently, if this rule be followed, be subdued and greyish, but rather warm; and the form simple, graceful, and unpretending. The building should retain the same general character on a closer examination. Every thing about it should be natural, and should appear as if the influences and forces which were in operation around it had been too strong to be resisted, and had rendered all efforts of art to check their power, or conceal the evidence of their action, entirely unavailing. It cannot

but be an alien child of the mountains; but it must show that it has been adopted and cherished by them. This effect is only attainable by great ease of outline and variety of colour; peculiarities which, as will be presently seen, the Westmoreland cottage possesses in a super-eminent degree.

50. Another feeling, with which one is impressed during a mountain ramble, is humility. I found fault with the insignificance of the Swiss cottage, because "it was not content to sink into a quiet corner, and personify humility." Now, had it not been seen to be pretending, it would not have been felt to be insignificant; for the feelings would have been gratified with its submission to, and retirement from, the majesty of the destructive influences which it rather seemed to rise up against in mockery. Such pretension is especially to be avoided in the mountain cottage: it can never lie too humbly in the pastures of the valley, nor shrink too submissively into the hollows of the hills; it should seem to be asking the storm for mercy, and the mountain for protection: and should appear to owe to its weakness, rather than to its strength, that it

is neither overwhelmed by the one, nor crushed by the other.

51. Such are the chief attributes, without which a mountain cottage cannot be said to be beautiful. It may possess others, which are desirable or objectionable, according to their situation, or other accidental circumstances. The nature of these will be best understood by examining an individual building. The material is, of course, what is most easily attainable and available without much labour. The Cumberland and Westmoreland hills are, in general, composed of clay-slate and grey-wacke, with occasional masses of chert\* (like that which forms the summit of Scawfell), porphyritic greenstone, and syenite. The chert decomposes deeply, and assumes a rough brown granular surface, deeply worn and furrowed. The clay-slate or grey-wacke, as it is shattered by frost, and carried down by torrents, of course forms itself into irregular flattish masses. The splintery edges of these are in some degree worn off by the action of water; and, slight decomposition taking place on the surface of the clay-slate, furnishes an aluminous soil,

[\* That is to say, a *flinty* volcanic ash.]

which is immediately taken advantage of by innumerable lichens, which change the dark grey of the original substance into an infinite variety of pale and warm colours. These stones, thus shaped to his hand, are the most convenient building materials the peasant can obtain.\* He lays his foundation and strengthens his angles with large masses, filling up the intervals with pieces of a more moderate size; and using here and there a little cement to bind the whole together, and to keep the wind from getting through the interstices; but never enough to fill them altogether up, or to render the face of the wall smooth. At intervals of from 4 ft. to 6 ft. a horizontal line of flat and broad fragments is introduced projecting about a foot from the wall. Whether this is supposed to give strength, I know not; but as it is invariably covered by luxuriant stonecrop, it is always a delightful object.

52. The door is flanked and roofed by three large oblong sheets of grey rock, whose form seems not to be considered of the slightest consequence. Those which form the cheeks

[\* Compare the treatment of a similar theme in *Modern Painters*, vol. iv., chaps. viii.-x.]

of the windows are generally selected with more care from the débris of some rock, which is naturally smooth and polished, after being subjected to the weather, such as granite or syenite. The window itself is narrow and deep set; in the better sort of cottages, latticed, but with no affectation of sweetbriar or eglantine about it. It may be observed of the whole of the cottage, that, though all is beautiful, nothing is pretty. The roof is rather flat, and covered with heavy fragments of the stone of which the walls are built, originally very loose; but generally cemented by accumulated soil, and bound together by houseleek, moss, and stonecrop: brilliant in colour, and singular in abundance. The form of the larger cottages, being frequently that of a cross, would hurt the eye by the sharp angles of the roof, were it not for the cushion-like vegetation with which they are rounded and concealed. Varieties of the fern sometimes relieve the massy forms of the stonecrop, with their light and delicate leafage. Windows in the roof are seldom met with. Of the chimney I shall speak hereafter.

53. Such are the prevailing peculiarities of

the Westmoreland cottage. "Is this all?" some one will exclaim: "a hovel, built of what first comes to hand, and in the most simple and convenient form; not one thought of architectural beauty ever coming into the builder's head!" Even so; to this illustration of an excellent rule, I wished particularly to direct attention: that the material which Nature furnishes, in any given country, and the form which she suggests, will always render the building the most beautiful, because the most appropriate. Observe how perfectly this cottage fulfils the conditions which were before ascertained to be necessary to perfection. Its colour is that of the ground on which it stands, always subdued and grey, but exquisitely rich, the colour being disposed crumbly, in groups of shadowy spots; a deep red brown, passing into black, being finely contrasted with the pale yellow of the *Lichen geographicus*, and the subdued white of another lichen, whose name I do not know; all mingling with each other as on a native rock, and with the same beautiful effect: the mass, consequently, at a distance, tells only as a large stone would, the simplicity of its

form contributing still farther to render it inconspicuous. When placed on a mountain-side such a cottage will become a point of interest, which will relieve its monotony, but will never cut the hill in two, or take away from its size. In the valley, the colour of these cottages agrees with every thing: the green light, which trembles through the leafage of the taller trees, falls with exquisite effect on the rich grey of the ancient roofs: the deep pool of clear water is not startled from its peace by their reflection; the ivy, or the creepers to which the superior wealth of the peasant of the valley does now and then pretend, in opposition to the general custom, cling gracefully and easily to its innumerable crevices; and rock, lake, and meadow seem to hail it with a brotherly affection, as if Nature had taken as much pains with it as she has with them.

54. Again, observe its ease of outline. There is not a single straight line to be met with from foundation to roof; all is bending or broken. The form of every stone in its walls is a study; for, owing to the infinite delicacy of structure in all minerals,



a piece of stone 3 in. in diameter, irregularly fractured, and a little worn by the weather, has precisely the same character of outline which we should find and admire in a mountain of the same material 6000 ft. high;\* and, therefore, the eye, though not feeling the cause, rests on every cranny, and crack, and fissure with delight. It is true that we have no idea that every small projection, if of chert, has such an outline as Scawfell's; if of grey-wacke, as Skiddaw's; or if of slate, as Helvellyn's; but their combinations of form are, nevertheless, felt to be exquisite, and we dwell upon every bend of the rough roof and every hollow of the loose wall, feeling it to be a design which no architect on earth could ever equal, sculptured by a chisel of unimaginable delicacy, and finished to a degree of perfection, which is unnoticed only because it is everywhere.

55. This ease and irregularity is peculiarly delightful where gracefulness and freedom of outline and detail are, as they always are in mountain countries, the chief characteristics of every scene. It is well that, where every

[\* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. 18, § 7 (p. 311).]

plant is wild and every torrent free, every field irregular in its form, every knoll various in its outline, one is not startled by well built walls, or unyielding roofs, but is permitted to trace in the stones of the peasant's dwelling, as in the crags of the mountain side, no evidence of the line or the mallet, but the operation of eternal influences, the presence of an Almighty hand. Another perfection connected with its ease of outline is, its severity of character: there is no foppery about it; not the slightest effort at any kind of ornament, but what nature chooses to bestow; it wears all its decorations wildly, covering its nakedness, not with what the peasant may plant, but with what the winds may bring. There is no gay colour or neatness about it; no green shutters or other abomination: all is calm and quiet, and severe, as the mind of a philosopher, and, withal, a little sombre. It is evidently old, and has stood many trials in its day; and the snow, and the tempest, and the torrent have all spared it, and left it in its peace, with its grey head unbowed, and its early strength unbroken, even though the spirit of decay seems creeping, like the

moss and the lichen, through the darkness of its crannies. This venerable and slightly melancholy character is the very soul of all its beauty.

56. There remains only one point to be noticed, its humility. This was before stated to be desirable, and it will here be found in perfection. The building draws as little attention upon itself as possible; since, with all the praise I have bestowed upon it, it possesses not one point of beauty in which it is not equalled or excelled by every stone at the side of the road. It is small in size, simple in form, subdued in tone, easily concealed or overshadowed; often actually so; and one is always delighted and surprised to find that what courts attention so little is capable of sustaining it so well. Yet it has no appearance of weakness: it is stoutly, though rudely, built; and one ceases to fear for its sake the violence of surrounding agencies, which, it may be seen, will be partly deprecated by its humility.

57. Such is the mountain cottage of Westmoreland; and such, with occasional varieties, are many of the mountain cottages of England

and Wales. It is true that my memory rests with peculiar pleasure in a certain quiet valley near Kirkstone, little known to the general tourist, distant from any public track, and, therefore, free from all the horrors of improvement: \* in which it seemed to me that the architecture of the cottage had attained a peculiar degree of perfection. But I think that this impression was rather produced by a few seemingly insignificant accompanying circumstances, than by any distinguished beauty of design in the cottages themselves. Their inhabitants were evidently poor, and apparently had not repaired their dwellings since their first erection; and, certainly, had never torn one tuft of moss or fern from roofs or walls, which were green with the rich vegetation of years. The valley was narrow, and quiet, and deep, and shaded by reverend trees, among whose trunks the grey cottages looked out, with a perfection of effect which I never remember to have seen equalled, though I believe that, in many of the mountain districts of Britain, the peasant's domicile is erected with equal good taste.

[\* Troutbeck, sixty years since?]



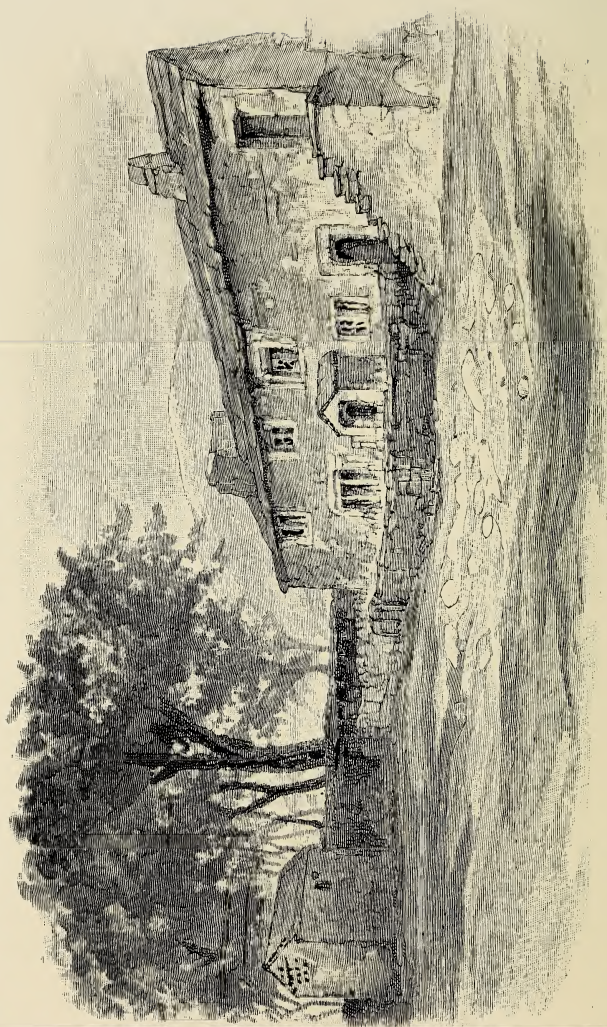


Fig. 6. The Highest House in England

58. I have always rejoiced in the thought, that our native highland scenery, though, perhaps, wanting in sublimity, is distinguished by a delicate finish in its details, and by a unanimity and propriety of feeling in the works of its inhabitants, which are elsewhere looked for in vain; and the reason of this is evident. The mind of the inhabitant of the continent, in general, is capable of deeper and finer sensations than that of the islander. It is higher in its aspirations, purer in its passions, wilder in its dreams, and fiercer in its anger; but it is wanting in gentleness, and in simplicity; naturally desirous of excitement, and incapable of experiencing, in equal degree, the calmer flow of human felicity, the stillness of domestic peace, and the pleasures of the humble hearth, consisting in every-day duties performed, and every-day mercies received; consequently, in the higher walks of architecture, where the mind is to be impressed or elevated, we never have equalled, and we never shall equal, them. It will be seen hereafter, when we leave the lowly valley for the torn ravine, and the grassy knoll for the ribbed precipice, that, if the continental architects cannot adorn

the pasture with the humble roof, they can crest the crag with eternal battlements;\* if they cannot minister to a landscape's peace, they can add to its terror; and it has been already seen, that, in the lowland cottages of France and Italy, where high and refined feelings were to be induced, where melancholy was to be excited, or majesty bestowed, the architect was successful, and his labour was perfect: but, now, nothing is required but humility and gentleness; and this, which he does not feel, he cannot give: it is contrary to the whole force of his character, nay, even to the spirit of his religion. It is unfelt even at the time when the soul is most chastened and subdued; for the epitaph on the grave is affected in its sentiment, and the tombstone gaudily gilded, or wreathed with vain flowers.

59. We cannot, then, be surprised at the effort at ornament and other fancied architectural beauties, which injure the effect of the more peaceful mountain scenery abroad; but still less should we be surprised at the perfect propriety which prevails in the same kind of scenery at home; for the error which is there

[\* This too refers to the unwritten sequel.]



induced by one mental deficiency, is here prevented by another. The uncultivated mountaineer of Cumberland has no taste, and no idea of what architecture means; he never thinks of what is right, or what is beautiful, but he builds what is most adapted to his purposes, and most easily erected: by suiting the building to the uses of his own life, he gives it humility; and, by raising it with the nearest material, adapts it to its situation. This is all that is required, and he has no credit in fulfilling the requirement, since the moment he begins to think of effect, he commits a barbarism by whitewashing the whole. The cottages of Cumberland would suffer much by this piece of improvement, were it not for the salutary operation of mountain rains and mountain winds.

60. So much for the hill dwellings of our own country. I think the examination of the five examples of the cottage which I have given have furnished all the general principles which are important or worthy of consideration; and I shall therefore devote no more time to the contemplation of individual buildings. But, before I leave the cottage altogether, it will

be necessary to notice a part of the building which I have in the separate instances purposely avoided mentioning, that I might have the advantage of immediate comparison; a part exceedingly important, and which seems to have been essential to the palace as well as to the cottage, ever since the time when Perdiccas received his significant gift of the sun from his Macedonian master, περιγράφας τὸν ἥλιον, ὅς ἦν κατὰ τὴν καπνοδόκην ἐς τὸν οἶκον ἐσέχων.\* And then I shall conclude the subject by a few general remarks on

[\* Herodotus viii. 137, freely quoted from memory. The story was that three brothers took service with a kinglet in Macedonia. The queen, who cooked their food herself, for it was in the good old times, noticed that the portion of Perdiccas, the youngest, always “rose” three times as large as any other. The king judged this to be an omen of the lad’s coming to fortune; and dismissed them. They demanded their wages. “When the king heard talk about wages—you must know *the sun was shining into the house, down the chimney*—he said (for God had hardened his heart) ‘There’s your wage; all you deserve and all you’ll get:’ and pointed to the sunshine. The elder brothers were dumbfounded when they heard that; but the lad, who happened to have his knife with him, said ‘We accept, King, the gift.’ With his knife he *made a scratch around the sunstreak* on the floor, took the shine of it three times into the fold of his kirtle”—his pocket, we should say nowadays—“and went his way.” Eventually he became king of Macedonia, and ancestor of Alexander the Great.]

modern ornamental cottages, illustrative of the principle so admirably developed in the beauty of the Westmoreland building; to which, it must be remembered, the palm was assigned, in preference to the Switzer's; not because it was more laboured, but because it was more natural.

OXFORD *Jan.* 1838.

## V.

### A CHAPTER ON CHIMNEYS

61. IT appears from the passage in Herodotus, which we alluded to in the last paper, that there has been a time, even in the most civilised countries, when the king's palace was entirely unfurnished with anything having the slightest pretension to the dignity of chimney tops ; and the savoury vapours which were wont to rise from the hospitable hearth, at which the queen or princess prepared the feast with the whitest of hands, escaped with indecorous facility through a simple hole in the flat roof. The dignity of smoke, however, is now better understood, and it is dismissed through Gothic pinnacles, and (as at Burleigh House) through Tuscan columns, with a most praiseworthy regard to its comfort and convenience. Let us consider if it is worth the trouble.

62. We advanced a position in the last

paper, that silence is never perfect without motion. That is, unless something which might possibly produce sound is evident to the eye, the absence of sound is not surprising to the ear, and, therefore, not impressive. Let it be observed, for instance, how much the stillness of a summer's evening is enhanced by the perception of the gliding and majestic motion of some calm river, strong but still ; or of the high and purple clouds ; or of the voiceless leaves, among the opening branches. To produce this impression, however, the motion must be uniform, though not necessarily slow. One of the chief peculiarities of the ocean thoroughfares of Venice, is the remarkable silence which rests upon them, enhanced as it is by the swift, but beautifully uniform motion of the gondola. Now, there is no motion more uniform, silent, or beautiful than that of smoke ; and, therefore, when we wish the peace or stillness of a scene to be impressive, it is highly useful to draw the attention to it.

63. In the cottage, therefore, a building peculiarly adapted for scenes of peace, the chimney, as conducting the eye to what is

agreeable, may be considered as important, and, if well managed, a beautiful accompaniment. But in buildings of a higher class, smoke ceases to be interesting. Owing to their general greater elevation, it is relieved against the sky, instead of against a dark background, thereby losing the fine silvery blue,—which among trees, or rising out of a distant country, is so exquisitely beautiful,—and assuming a dingy yellowish black: its motion becomes useless; for the idea of stillness is no longer desirable, or, at least, no longer attainable, being interrupted by the nature of the building itself: and, finally, the associations it arouses are not dignified; we may think of a comfortable fireside, perhaps, but are quite as likely to dream of kitchens, and spits, and shoulders of mutton. None of these imaginations are in their place, if the character of the building be elevated; they are barely tolerable in the dwelling house and the street. Now, when smoke is objectionable, it is certainly improper to direct attention to the chimney; and, therefore, for two weighty reasons, *decorated* chimneys, of any sort or size whatsoever, are inexcusable barbarisms;

first, because, where smoke is beautiful, decoration is unsuited to the building ; and secondly, because, where smoke is ugly, decoration directs attention *to its ugliness*.

64. It is unfortunately a prevailing idea with some of our architects, that what is a disagreeable object in itself may be relieved or concealed by lavish ornament ; and there never was a greater mistake. It should be a general principle, that what is intrinsically ugly should be utterly destitute of ornament, that the eye may not be drawn to it. The pretended skulls of the three Magi at Cologne are set in gold, and have a diamond in each eye ; and are a thousand times more ghastly than if their brown bones had been left in peace. Such an error as this ought never to be committed in architecture. If any part of the building has disagreeable associations connected with it, let it alone : do not ornament it. Keep it subdued, and simply adapted to its use ; and the eye will not go to it, nor quarrel with it. It would have been well if this principle had been kept in view in the renewal of some of the public buildings in Oxford. In All Souls College, for instance, the architect has carried

his chimneys half as high as all the rest of the building, and fretted them with Gothic. The eye is instantly caught by the plated candlestick-like columns, and runs with some complacency up the groining and fret-work, and alights finally and fatally on a red chimney top. He might as well have built a Gothic aisle at an entrance to a coal wharf. We have no scruple in saying that the man who could desecrate the Gothic trefoil into an ornament for a chimney has not the slightest feeling, and never will have any, of its beauty or its use; he was never born to be an architect, and never will be one.

65. Now, if chimneys are not to be decorated (since their existence is necessary), it becomes an object of some importance to know what is to be done with them: and we enter into the enquiry before leaving the cottage, as in its most proper place; because, in the cottage, and only in the cottage, it is desirable to direct attention to smoke.

Speculation, however, on the *beau idéal* of a chimney can never be unshackled; because, though we may imagine what it ought to be, we can never tell, until the house is built,



what it *must* be ; we may require it to be short, and find that it will smoke unless it is long ; or, we may desire it to be covered, and find it will not go unless it is open. We can fix, therefore, on no one model ; but by looking over the chimneys of a few nations, we may deduce some general principles from their varieties, which may always be brought into play, by whatever circumstances our own imaginations may be confined.

66. Looking first to the mind of the people, we cannot expect to find good examples of the chimney, as we go to the south. The Italian or the Spaniard does not know the use of a chimney, properly speaking ; they *have* such things, and they light a fire, five days in the year, chiefly of wood, which does not give smoke enough to teach the chimney its business ; but they have not the slightest idea of the meaning or the beauty of such things as hobs, and hearths, and Christmas blazes ; and we should, therefore, expect, *à priori*, that there would be no soul in their chimneys ; that they would have no practised substantial air about them ; that they would, in short, be as awkward and as much in the

way, as individuals of the human race are, when they don't know what to do with themselves, or what they were created for. But in England, sweet carbonaceous England, we flatter ourselves we *do* know something about fire, and smoke too, or our eyes have strangely deceived us; and, from the whole comfortable character and fireside disposition of the nation, we should conjecture that the architecture of the chimney would be understood, both as a matter of taste and as a matter of comfort, to the *ne plus ultra* of perfection. Let us see how far our expectations are realised.

67. Fig. 7, *a*, *b* and *c* are English chimneys. They are distinguishable, we think, at a glance, from all the rest, by a down-right serviceableness of appearance, a substantial, unaffected, decent, and chimney-like deportment, in the contemplation of which we experience infinite pleasure and edification, particularly as it seems to us to be strongly contrasted with an appearance, in all the other chimneys, of an indefinable something, only to be expressed by the interesting word "humbug." Fig. 7 *a* is a chimney of Cumberland, and the north of Lancashire. It

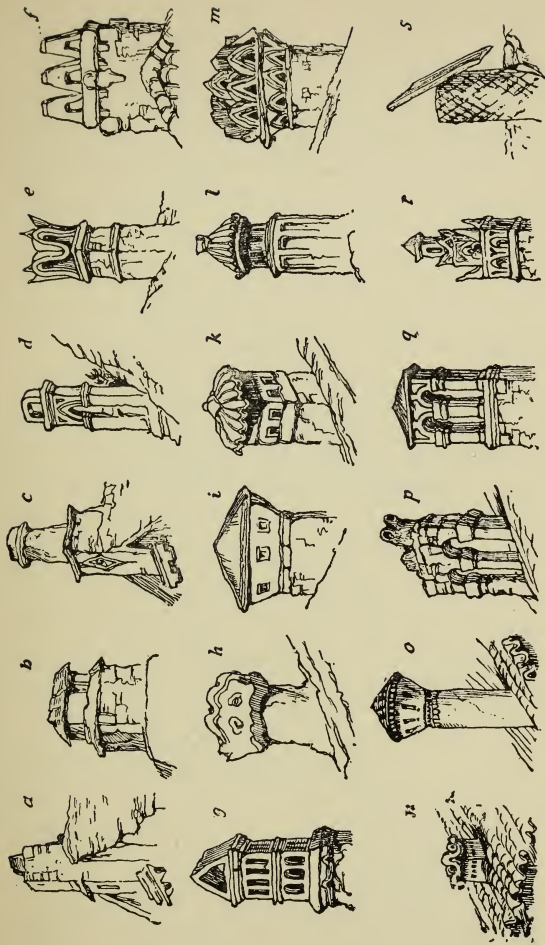


FIG. 7. Chimneys.



is, as may be seen at a glance, only applicable at the extremity of the roof, and requires a bent flue. It is built of unhewn stones, in the same manner as the Westmoreland cottages; the flue itself being not one third the width of the chimney, as is seen at the top, where four flat stones placed on their edges form the termination of the flue itself, and give lightness of appearance to the whole. Cover this with a piece of paper, and observe how heavy and square the rest becomes. A few projecting stones continue the line of the roof across the centre of the chimney, and two large masses support the projection of the whole, and unite it agreeably with the wall. This is exclusively a cottage chimney; it cannot, and must not, be built of civilised materials; it must be rough, and mossy, and broken; but it is decidedly the best chimney of the whole set. It is simple and substantial, without "being" cumbrous; it gives great variety to the wall from which it projects, terminates the roof agreeably, and dismisses its smoke with infinite propriety.

68. Fig. *b* is a chimney common over the whole of the north of England; being, as I

think, one that will go well in almost any wind, and is applicable at any part of the roof. It is also roughly built, consisting of a roof of loose stones, sometimes one large flat slab, supported above the flue by four large supports, each of a single stone. It is rather light in its appearance, and breaks the ridge of a roof very agreeably. Separately considered, it is badly proportioned; but, as it just equals the height to which a long chimney at the extremity of the building would rise above the roof (as in *a*), it is quite right *in situ*, and would be ungainly if it were higher. The upper part is always dark, owing to the smoke, and tells agreeably against any background seen through the hollow.

69. Fig. *c* is the chimney of the Westmoreland cottage which formed the subject of the last paper. The good taste which prevailed in the rest of the building is not so conspicuous here, because the architect has begun to consider effect instead of utility, and has put a diamond-shaped piece of ornament on the front (usually containing the date of the building), which was not necessary, and looks

out of place. He has endeavoured to build neatly too, and has bestowed a good deal of plaster on the outside, by all which circumstances the work is infinitely deteriorated. We have always disliked cylindrical chimneys, probably because they put us in mind of glasshouses and manufactories, for we are aware of no more definite reason; yet this example is enduring, and has a character about it which it would be a pity to lose. Sometimes when the square part is carried down the whole front of the cottage, it looks like the remains of some grey tower, and is not felt to be a chimney at all. Such deceptions are always very dangerous, though in this case sometimes attended with good effect, as in the old building called Coniston Hall, on the shores of Coniston Water, whose distant outline (Fig. 8) is rendered light and picturesque, by the size and shape of its chimneys, which are the same in character as Fig. *c*.

70. Of English chimneys adapted for buildings of a more elevated character, we can adduce no good examples. The old red brick mass, which we see in some of our venerable

manor-houses, has a great deal of English character about it, and is always agreeable, when the rest of the building is of brick. Fig. *p* is a chimney of this kind: there is nothing remarkable in it; it is to be met with all over England; but we have placed it beside its neighbour *q* to show how the same form and idea are modified by the mind of the nations who employ it. The design is the same in both, the proportions also; but the one is a chimney, the other a paltry model of a paltrier edifice. Fig. *q* is Swiss, and is liable to all the objections advanced against the Swiss cottages; it is a despicable mimicry of a large building, like the tower in the description of the Italian cottage (§ 31), carved in stone, it is true, but not the less to be reprobated. Fig. *p*, on the contrary, is adapted to its use, and has no affectation about it. It would be spoiled, however, if built in stone; because the marked bricks tell us the size of the whole at once, and prevent the eye from suspecting any intention to deceive it with a mockery of arches and columns, the imitation of which would be too perfect in stone; and therefore, even in this





FIG. 8. Coniston Hall, from the Lake near Brantwood (1837).



case, we have failed in discovering a chimney adapted to the higher class of edifices.

71. Fig. *d* is a Netherland chimney, *e* and *f* German. Fig. *d* belongs to an old Gothic building in Malines, and is a good example of the application of the same lines to the chimney which occur in other parts of the edifice, without bestowing any false elevation of character. It is roughly carved in stone, projecting at its base grotesquely from the roof, and covered at the top. The pointed arch, by which its character is given, prevents it from breaking in upon the lines of the rest of the building, and, therefore, in reality renders it less conspicuous than it would otherwise have been. We should never have noticed its existence, had we not been looking out for chimneys.

72. Fig. *e* is also carved in stone, and where there is much variety of architecture, or where the buildings are grotesque, would be a good chimney, for the very simple reason, that it resembles nothing but a chimney, and its lines are graceful. Fig. *f*, though ugly in the abstract, might be used with effect in situations where perfect simplicity would be

too conspicuous; but both *e* and *f* are evidently the awkward efforts of a tasteless nation, to produce something original: they have lost the chastity which we admired in *a*, without obtaining the grace and spirit of *l* and *o*. In fact, they are essentially German.

73. Figs. *h* to *m*, inclusive, are Spanish, and have a peculiar character, which would render it quite impossible to employ them out of their own country. Yet they are not decorated chimneys. There is not one fragment of ornament on any of them. All is done by variety of form; and with such variety no fault can be found, because it is necessary to give them the character of the buildings, out of which they rise. For we may observe here, once for all, that character may be given either by form or by decoration, and that where the latter is improper, variety of form is allowable, because the humble associations which render ornament objectionable, also render simplicity of form unnecessary.\* We need not then find fault with *fantastic* chimneys, provided they are kept in

\* Elevation of character, as was seen in the Italian cottage, depends upon simplicity of form.

unison with the rest of the building, and do not draw too much attention.

74. Fig. *h*, according to this rule, is a very good chimney. It is graceful without pretending, and its grotesqueness will suit the buildings round it—we wish we could give them: they are at Cordova.

Figs. *k* and *l* ought to be seen, as they would be in reality, rising brightly up against the deep blue heaven of the south, the azure gleaming through their hollows; unless perchance a slight breath of refined, pure, pale vapour finds its way from time to time out of them into the light air; their tiled caps casting deep shadows on their white surfaces, and their *tout ensemble* causing no interruption to the feelings excited by the Moresco arches and grotesque dwelling houses with which they would be surrounded; they are sadly spoiled by being cut off at their bases.

75. Figs. *g*, *n*, *o* are Italian. Fig. *g* has only been given, because it is constantly met with among the more modern buildings of Italy. Figs. *n* and *o* are almost the only two varieties of chimneys which are to be found on the old Venetian palaces (whose style is

to be traced partly to the Turk, and partly to the Moor). The curved lines of *n* harmonise admirably with those of the roof itself, and its diminutive size leaves the simplicity of form of the large building to which it belongs entirely uninterrupted and uninjured. Fig. *o* is seen perpetually carrying the whiteness of the Venetian marble up into the sky; but it is too tall, and attracts by far too much attention, being conspicuous on the sides of all the canals.

76. Figs. *q*, *r*, *s* are Swiss. Fig. *r* is one specimen of an extensive class of decorated chimneys, met with in the north-eastern cantons. It is never large, and consequently having no false elevation of character, and being always seen with eyes which have been prepared for it, by resting on the details of the Swiss cottage, is less disagreeable than might be imagined, but ought never to be imitated. The pyramidal form is generally preserved, but the design is the same in no two examples.

Fig. *s* is a chimney very common in the eastern cantons, the principle of which we never understood. The oblique part moves on a

hinge, so as to be capable of covering the chimney like a hat; and the whole is covered with wooden scales, like those of a fish. This chimney sometimes comes in very well among the confused rafters of the mountain cottage, though it is rather too remarkable to be in good taste.

77. It seems then, that out of the eighteen chimneys, which we have noticed, though several possess character, and one or two elegance, only two are to be found fit for imitation; and, of these, one is exclusively a *cottage* chimney. This is somewhat remarkable and may serve as a proof:—

First, of what we at first asserted, that chimneys which in any way attract notice (and if these had not, we should not have sketched them) were seldom to be imitated; that there are few buildings which require them to be singular, and none which can tolerate them if decorated; and that the architect should always remember that the size and height being by necessity fixed, the form which draws least attention is the best.

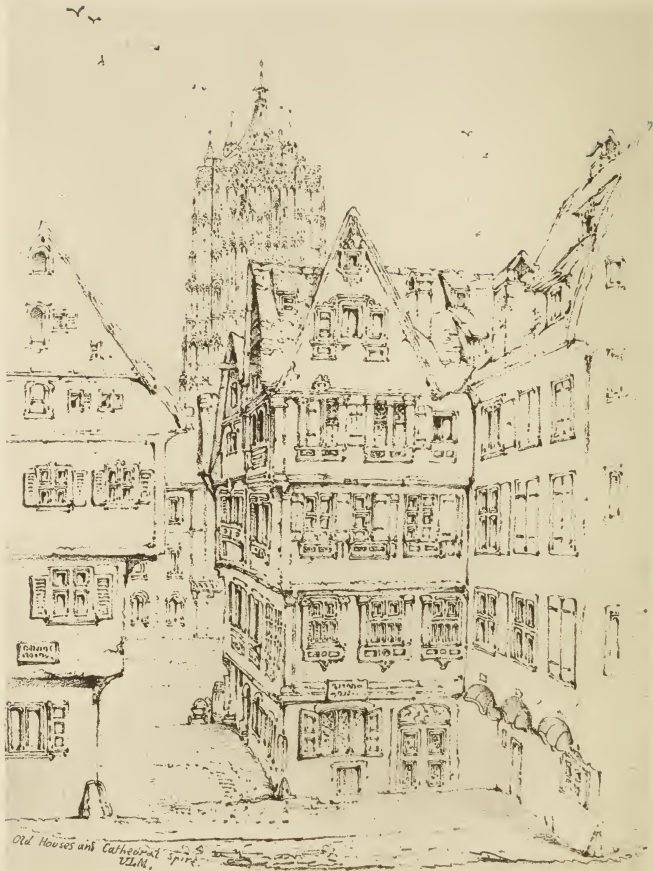
78. Secondly, that this inconspicuousness is to be obtained, not by adhering to any model

of simplicity, but by taking especial care that the lines of the chimney are no interruption, and its colour no contrast, to those of the building to which it belongs. Thus Figs. *h* to *m* would be far more actually remarkable in their natural situation, if they were more simple in their form; for they would interrupt the character of the rich architecture by which they are surrounded. Fig. *d*, rising as it does above an old Gothic window, would have attracted instant attention, had it not been for the occurrence of the same lines in it which prevail beneath it. The form of *n* only assimilates it more closely with the roof on which it stands. But we must not *imitate* chimneys of this kind, for their excellence consists only in their agreement with other details, separated from which they would be objectionable; we can only follow the principle of the design, which appears, from all that we have advanced, to be this: we require, in a good chimney, *the character of the building to which it belongs divested of all its elevation, and its prevailing lines, deprived of all their ornament.*

79. This it is, no doubt, excessively difficult to give; and, in consequence, there are very







Old Houses and Cathedral Spire  
Ulm.

J. F. K. 111

Allen & Co. 111

Houses and Cathedral Spire, Ulm.  
1835

few cities or edifices in which the chimneys are not objectionable. We must not, therefore, omit to notice the fulfilment of our expectations, founded on English character. The only two chimneys fit for imitation, in the whole eighteen, are English; and we would not infer anything from this, tending to invalidate the position formerly advanced, that there was no taste in England; but we would adduce it as a farther illustration of the rule, that what is most adapted to its purpose is most beautiful. For that we have no taste, even in chimneys, is sufficiently proved by the roof effects, even of the most ancient, unaffected, and unplastered of our streets, in which the chimneys, instead of assisting in the composition of the groups of roofs, stand out in staring masses of scarlet and black, with foxes and cocks whisking about, like so many little black devils, in the smoke on the top of them, interrupting all repose, annihilating all dignity, and awaking every possible conception which would be picturesque, and every imagination which would be rapturous, to the mind of master-sweeps.

80. On the other hand, though they have not on the Continent the same knowledge of

the use and beauty of chimneys in the abstract, they display their usual good taste in grouping, or concealing them ; and, whether we find them mingling with the fantastic domiciles of the German, with the rich imaginations of the Spaniard, with the classical remains and creations of the Italian, they are never intrusive or disagreeable ; and either assist the grouping, and relieve the horizontality of the lines of the roof, or remain entirely unnoticed and insignificant, smoking their pipes in peace.

81. It is utterly impossible to give rules for the attainment of these effects, since they are the result of a feeling of the proportion and relation of lines, which, if not natural to a person, cannot be acquired, but by long practice and close observation ; and it presupposes a power rarely bestowed on an English architect, of setting regularity at defiance, and sometimes comfort out of the question. We could give some particular examples of this grouping ; but, as this paper has already swelled to an unusual length, we shall defer them until we come to the consideration of street effects in general. Of the chimney in the abstract, we are afraid we have only said enough to illustrate,



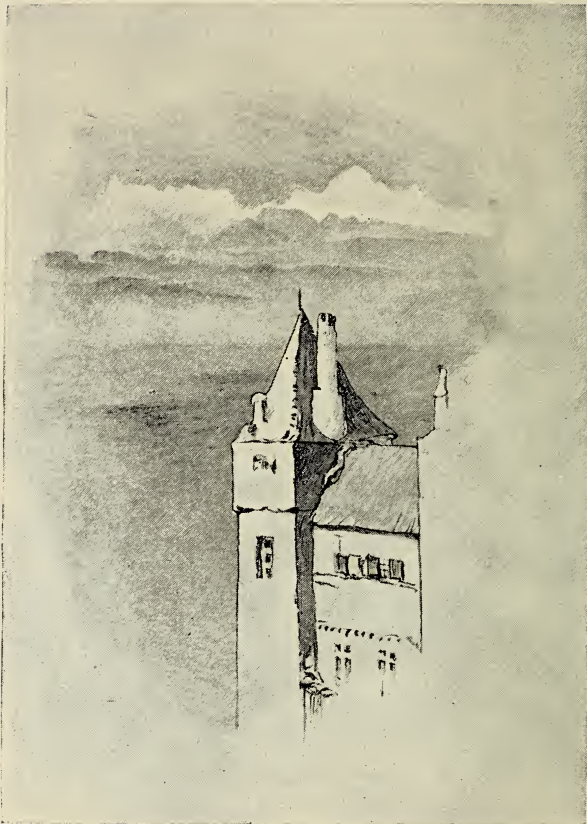


Fig. 9. Chimney at Neuchatel  
(Dent du Midi and Mont Blanc in the distance)

without removing, the difficulty of designing it; but we cannot but think that the general principles which have been deduced, if carefully followed out, would be found useful, if not for the attainment of excellence, at least for the prevention of barbarism.

OXFORD, *Feb.* 10, [1838].

## VI.

### THE COTTAGE—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

“Nunquam aliud Natura, aliud Sapiaentia, dicit.”

*Juvenal* xiv. 321.

82. IT now only remains for us to conclude the subject of the cottage, by a few general remarks on the just application of modern buildings to adorn or vivify natural scenery.

There are, we think, only three cases in which the cottage is considered as an element of architectural, or any other kind of beauty, since it is ordinarily raised by the peasant where he likes, and how he likes; and, therefore, as we have seen, frequently in good taste.

83. I. When a nobleman, or man of fortune, amuses himself with superintending the erection of the domiciles of his domestics. II. When ornamental summer-houses, or mimicries of wigwams, are to be erected as



ornamental adjuncts to a prospect which the owner has done all he can to spoil, that it may be worthy of the honour of having him to look at it. III. When the landlord exercises a certain degree of influence over the cottages of his tenants, or the improvements of the neighbouring village, so as to induce such a tone of feeling in the new erections as he may think suitable to the situation.

84. In the first of these cases, there is little to be said; for the habitation of the domestic is generally a dependent feature of his master's, and, therefore, to be considered as a part of it. Porters' lodges are also dependent upon, and to be regulated by, the style of the architecture to which they are attached; and they are generally well managed in England, properly united with the gate, and adding to the effect of the entrance.

In the second case, as the act is in itself a barbarism, it would be useless to consider what would be the best mode of perpetrating it.

In the third case, we think it will be useful to apply a few general principles, deduced from positions formerly advanced.

85. All buildings are, of course, to be

considered in connection with the country in which they are to be raised. Now, all landscape must possess one out of four distinct characters.

It must be either woody, the green country; cultivated, the blue country; wild, the grey country; or hilly, the brown country.

I. The Woody, or green, Country. By this is to be understood the mixture of park, pasture, and variegated forest, which is only to be seen in temperate climates, and in those parts of a kingdom which have not often changed proprietors, but have remained in unproductive beauty (or at least, furnishing timber only), the garden of the wealthier population. It is to be seen in no other country, perhaps, so well as in England. In other districts, we find extensive masses of black forest, but not the mixture of sunny glade, and various foliage, and dewy sward, which we meet with in the richer park districts of England. This kind of country is always surgy, oceanic, and massy, in its outline: it never affords blue distances, unless seen from a height; and, even then, the nearer groups are large, and draw away the

attention from the back-ground. The under soil is kept cool by the shade, and its vegetation rich; so that the prevailing colour, except for a few days at the fall of the leaf, is a fresh green. A good example of this kind of country is the view from Richmond Hill.

86. Now, first, let us consider what sort of feeling this green country excites; and, in order to do so, be it observed, that anything which is apparently enduring and unchangeable gives us an impression rather of future, than of past, duration of existence; but anything which being perishable, and from its nature subject to change, has yet existed to a great age, gives us an impression of antiquity, though, of course, none of stability. A mountain, for instance (not geologically speaking, for then the furrows on its brow give it age as visible as was ever wrinkled on human forehead, but considering it as it appears to ordinary eyes), appears to be beyond the influence of change: it does not put us in mind of its past existence, by showing us any of the effect of time upon itself; we do not feel that it is old, because it is not approaching any kind of death; it is a mass of un sentient undecaying matter, which,

if we think about it, we discover must have existed for some time, but which does not tell this fact to our feelings, or, rather, which tells us of no time at which it came into existence; and therefore, gives us no standard by which to measure its age, which, unless measured, cannot be distinctly felt. But a very old forest tree is a thing subject to the same laws of nature as ourselves: it is an energetic being, liable to an approaching death; its age is written on every spray; and, because we see it is susceptible of life and annihilation, like our own, we imagine it must be capable of the same feelings, and possess the same faculties, and, above all others, memory: it is always telling us about the past, never pointing to the future; we appeal to it, as to a thing which has seen and felt during a life similar to our own, though of ten times its duration, and therefore receive from it a perpetual impression of antiquity. So again a ruined town gives us an impression of antiquity; the stones of which it is built, none; for their age is not written upon them.

87. This being the case, it is evident that the chief feeling induced by woody country

is one of reverence for its antiquity. There is a quiet melancholy about the decay of the patriarchal trunks, which is enhanced by the green and elastic vigour of the young saplings; the noble form of the forest aisles, and the subdued light which penetrates their entangled boughs, combine to add to the impression; and the whole character of the scene is calculated to excite conservative feeling. The man who could remain a radical in a wood country is a disgrace to his species.

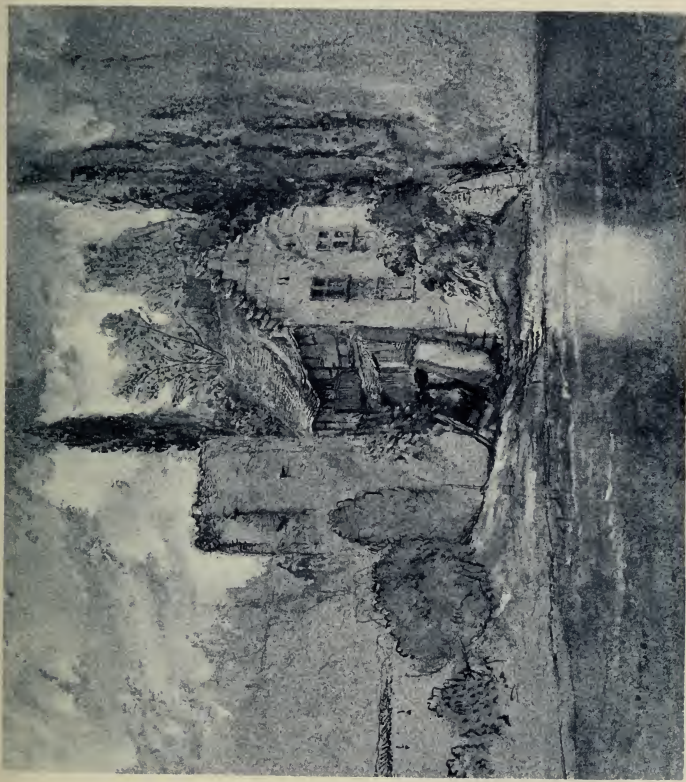
88. Now, this feeling of mixed melancholy and veneration is the one of all others which the modern cottage must not be allowed to violate. It may be fantastic or rich in detail; for the one character will make it look old-fashioned, and the other will assimilate with the intertwining of leaf and bough around it: but it must not be spruce, or natty, or very bright in colour; and the older it looks the better.

A little grotesqueness in form is the more allowable, because the imagination is naturally active in the obscure and indefinite daylight of wood scenery; conjures up innumerable beings, of every size and shape, to people its

alleys and smile through its thickets; and is by no means displeased to find some of its inventions half-realised in a decorated panel or grinning extremity of a rafter.

89. These characters being kept in view, as objects to be attained, the remaining considerations are technical.

For the form. Select any well-grown group of the tree which prevails most near the proposed site of the cottage. Its summit will be a rounded mass. Take the three principal points of its curve: namely, its apex and the two points where it unites itself with neighbouring masses. Strike a circle through these three points; and the angle contained in the segment cut off by a line joining the two lower points is to be the angle of the cottage roof. (Of course we are not thinking of interior convenience: the architect must establish his mode of beauty first, and then approach it as nearly as he can.) This angle will generally be very obtuse; and this is one reason why the Swiss cottage is always beautiful when it is set among walnut or chestnut trees. Its obtuse roof is just about the true angle. With pines or larches, the angle should not be



Allen & Co. St

J. Ruskin

On the Reuss, below Lucerne





regulated by the form of the tree, but by the slope of the branches. The building itself should be low and long, so that, if possible, it may not be seen all at once, but may be partially concealed by trunks or leafage at various distances.

90. For the colour, that of wood is always beautiful. If the wood of the near trees be used, so much the better ; but the timber should be rough-hewn, and allowed to get weather-stained. Cold colours will not suit with green ; and, therefore, slated roofs are disagreeable, unless, as in the Westmoreland cottage, the grey roof is warmed with lichenous vegetation, when it will do well with anything ; but thatch is better. If the building be not of wood, the walls may be built of anything which will give them a quiet and unobtruding warmth of tone. White, if in shade, is sometimes allowable ; but, if visible at any point more than 200 yards off, it will spoil the whole landscape. In general, as we saw before, the building will bear some fantastic finishing, that is, if it be entangled in forest ; but, if among massive groups of trees, separated by smooth sward, it must be kept simple.

91. II. The Cultivated, or blue, Country. This is the rich champaign land, in which large trees are more sparingly scattered, and which is chiefly devoted to the purposes of agriculture. In this we are perpetually getting blue distances from the slightest elevation, which are rendered more decidedly so by their contrast with warm corn or ploughed fields in the foreground. Such is the greater part of England. The view from the hills of Malvern is a good example. In districts of this kind, all is change; one year's crop has no memory of its predecessor; all is activity, prosperity, and usefulness: nothing is left to the imagination; there is no obscurity, no poetry, no nonsense: the colours of the landscape are bright and varied; it is thickly populated, and glowing with animal life. Here, then, the character of the cottage must be cheerfulness; its colours may be vivid: white is always beautiful; even red tiles are allowable, and red bricks endurable. Neatness will not spoil it: the angle of its roof may be acute, its windows sparkling, and its roses red and abundant; but it must not be ornamented nor fantastic, it must be evidently built for the uses of common life, and have a matter-of-fact

business-like air about it. Its outhouses, and pigsties, and dunghills should therefore be kept in sight: the latter may be made very pretty objects, by twisting them with the pitchfork, and plaiting them into braids, as the Swiss do.

92. III. The Wild, or grey, Country. "Wild" is not exactly a correct epithet; we mean wide, unenclosed, treeless undulations of land, whether cultivated or not. The greater part of northern France, though well brought under the plough, would come under the denomination of grey country. Occasional masses of monotonous forest do not destroy this character. Here, size is desirable, and massiness of form; but we must have no brightness of colour in the cottage, otherwise it would draw the eye to it at three miles off, and the whole landscape would be covered with conspicuous dots. White is agreeable, if sobered down; slate allowable on the roof as well as thatch. For the rest, we need only refer to the remarks made on the propriety of the French cottage.

93. Lastly, Hill, or brown, Country. And here if we look to England alone, as peculiarly a cottage country, the remarks formerly advanced,

in the consideration of the Westmoreland cottage, are sufficient; but if we go into mountain districts of more varied character, we shall find a difference existing between every range of hills, which will demand a corresponding difference in the style of their cottages. The principles, however, are the same in all situations, and it would be a hopeless task to endeavour to give more than general principles. In hill country, however, another question is introduced, whose investigation is peculiarly necessary in cases in which the ground has inequality of surface,—that of position. And the difficulty here is, not so much to ascertain where the building ought to be, as to put it there, without suggesting any enquiry as to the mode in which it got there; to prevent its just application from appearing artificial. But we cannot enter into this enquiry, before laying down a number of principles of composition, which are applicable, not only to cottages, but generally; and which we cannot deduce until we come to the consideration of buildings in groups.

94. Such are the great divisions under which country and rural buildings may be

comprehended ; but there are intermediate conditions, in which modified forms of the cottage are applicable ; and it frequently happens that country which, considered in the abstract, would fall under one of these classes, possesses, owing to its peculiar climate or associations, a very different character. Italy, for instance, is blue country ; yet it has not the least resemblance to English blue country. We have paid particular attention to wood ; first, because we had not, in any previous paper, considered what was beautiful in a forest cottage ; and secondly, because in such districts there is generally much more influence exercised by proprietors over their tenantry, than in populous and cultivated districts ; and our English park scenery, though exquisitely beautiful, is sometimes, we think, a little monotonous, from the want of this very feature.

95. And now, farewell to the cottage, and, with it, to the humility of natural scenery. We are sorry to leave it ; not that we have any idea of living in a cottage, as a comfortable thing ; not that we prefer mud to marble, or deal to mahogany ; but that, with it, we leave much of what is most beautiful of earth, the

low and bee-inhabited scenery, which is full of quiet and prideless emotion, of such calmness as we can imagine prevailing over our earth when it was new in heaven. We are going into higher walks of architecture, where we shall find a less close connexion established between the building and the soil on which it stands, or the air with which it is surrounded, but a closer connexion with the character of its inhabitant. We shall have less to do with natural feeling, and more with human passion ; we are coming out of stillness into turbulence, out of seclusion into the multitude, out of the wilderness into the world.

*PART II.*

**The Villa.**

THE MOUNTAIN VILLA : LAGO DI COMO :

THE LOWLAND VILLA :--ENGLAND :

THE BRITISH VILLA : PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.





## I.

### THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO.

96. IN all arts or sciences, before we can determine what is just or beautiful in a group, we must ascertain what is desirable in the parts which compose it, separately considered; and therefore it will be most advantageous in the present case, to keep out of the village and the city, until we have searched hill and dale for examples of isolated buildings. This mode of considering the subject is also agreeable to the feelings, as the transition from the higher orders of solitary edifices, to groups of associated edifices, is not so sudden or startling, as that from nature's most humble peace, to man's most turbulent pride.

We have contemplated the rural dwelling of the peasant; let us next consider the ruralised domicile of the gentleman: and here, as before, we shall first determine what is

theoretically beautiful, and then observe how far our expectations are fulfilled in individual buildings. But a few preliminary observations are necessary.

97. Man, the peasant, is a being of more marked national character, than man, the educated and refined. For nationality is founded, in a great degree, on prejudices and feelings inculcated and aroused in youth, which grow inveterate in the mind as long as its views are confined to the place of its birth; its ideas moulded by the customs of its country, and its conversation limited to a circle composed of individuals of habits and feelings like its own; but which are gradually softened down, and eradicated, when the mind is led into general views of things, when it is guided by reflection instead of habit, and has begun to lay aside opinions contracted under the influence of association and prepossession, substituting in their room philosophical deductions from the calm contemplation of the various tempers, and thoughts, and customs, of mankind. The love of its country will remain with undiminished strength in the cultivated mind, but the national modes of

thinking will vanish from the disciplined intellect.

98. Now as it is only by these mannerisms of thought that architecture is affected, we shall find that, the more polished the mind of its designer, the less national will be the building; for its architect will be led away by a search after a model of ideal beauty, and will not be involuntarily guided by deep-rooted feelings, governing irresistibly his heart and hand. He will therefore be in perpetual danger of forgetting the necessary unison of scene and climate, and, following up the chase of the ideal, will neglect the beauty of the natural; an error which he could not commit, were he less general in his views, for then the prejudices to which he would be subject, would be as truly in unison with the objects which created them, as answering notes with the chords which awaken them. We must not, therefore, be surprised, if buildings bearing impress of the exercise of fine thought and high talent in their design, should yet offend us by perpetual discords with scene and climate; and if, therefore, we sometimes derive less instruction, and less pleasure from the

columnar portico of the Palace, than from the latched door of the Cottage.

99. Again: man, in his hours of relaxation, when he is engaged in the pursuit of mere pleasure, is less national than when he is under the influence of any of the more violent feelings which agitate every day life. The reason of this may at first appear somewhat obscure, but it will become evident, on a little reflection. Aristotle's definition of pleasure, perhaps the best ever given, is "an agitation, and settling of the spirit into its own proper nature;" similar, by the by, to the giving of liberty of motion to the molecules of a mineral, followed by their crystallisation, into their own proper form. Now this "proper nature," *ὑπάρχουσαν φύσιν*, is not the acquired national habit, but the common and universal constitution of the human soul. This constitution is kept under by the feelings which prompt to action, for those feelings depend upon parts of character, or of prejudice, which are peculiar to individuals or to nations; and the pleasure which all men seek is a kind of partial casting away of these more active feelings, to return to the calm and unchanging

constitution of mind which is the same in all.

100. We shall, therefore, find that man, in the business of his life, in religion, war, or ambition, is national, but in relaxation he manifests a nature common to every individual of his race. A Turk, for instance, and an English farmer, smoking their evening pipes, differ only in so much as the one has a mouthpiece of amber, and the other one of sealing wax; the one has a turban on his head, and the other a nightcap; they are the same in feeling, and to all intents and purposes the same men. But a Turkish janissary and an English grenadier differ widely in all their modes of thinking, feeling, and acting; they are strictly national. So again, a Tyrolese evening dance, though the costume, and the step, and the music may be different, is the same in feeling as that of the Parisian guinguette; but follow the Tyrolese into their temples, and their deep devotion and beautiful though superstitious reverence will be found very different from any feeling exhibited during a mass in Notre-Dame. This being the case, it is a direct consequence, that we

shall find much nationality in the Church or the Fortress, or in any building devoted to the purposes of active life, but very little in that which is dedicated exclusively to relaxation, the Villa. We shall be compelled to seek out nations of very strong feeling and imaginative disposition, or we shall find no correspondence whatever between their character, and that of their buildings devoted to pleasure.

101. In our own country, for instance, there is not the slightest. Beginning at the head of Windermere, and running down its border for about six miles, there are six important gentlemen's seats, villas they may be called; the first of which is a square white mass, decorated with pilasters of no order, set in a green avenue, sloping down to the water; the second is an imitation, we suppose, of something possessing theoretical existence in Switzerland, with sharp gable ends, and wooden flourishes turning the corners, set on a little dumpy mound with a slate wall running all round it, glittering with iron pyrites; the third is a blue dark-looking box, squeezed up into a group of straggly larches, with a bog in front of it; the fourth is a

cream-coloured domicile, in a large park, rather quiet and unaffected, the best of the four, though that is not saying much; the fifth is an old-fashioned thing, formal, and narrow-windowed, yet grey in its tone, and quiet, and not to be maligned; and the sixth is a non-descript, circular, putty-coloured habitation, with a leaden dome on the top of it.

102. If, however, instead of taking Windermere, we trace the shore of the Lago di Como, we shall find some expression and nationality; and there, therefore, will we go, to return, however, to England, when we have obtained some data by which to judge of her more fortunate edifices. We notice the mountain villa first, for two reasons; because effect is always more considered in its erection, than when it is to be situated in a less interesting country, and because the effect desired is very rarely given, there being far greater difficulties to contend with. But one word more, before setting off for the south. Though, as we saw before, the gentleman has less *national* character than the boor, his *individual* character is more marked, especially in its finer features, which are clearly and perfectly developed by

education ; consequently, when the inhabitant of the villa has had anything to do with its erection, we might expect to find indications of individual and peculiar feelings, which it would be most interesting to follow out. But this is no part of our present task ; at some future period we hope to give a series of essays on the habitations of the most distinguished men of Europe, showing how the alterations which they directed, and the expression which they bestowed, corresponded with the turn of their emotions, and leading intellectual faculties : but at present we have to deal only with generalities ; we have to ascertain not what will be pleasing to a single mind, but what will afford gratification to every eye possessing a certain degree of experience, and every mind endowed with a certain degree of taste.

103. Without further preface, therefore, let us endeavour to ascertain what would be theoretically beautiful, on the shore, or among the scenery of the Larian Lake, preparatory to a sketch of the general features of those villas which exist there, in too great a multitude to admit, on our part, of much individual detail.



For the general tone of the scenery, we may refer to the paper on the Italian cottage; for the shores of the Lake of Como have generally the character there described, with a little more cheerfulness, and a little less elevation,\* but aided by great variety of form. They are not quite so rich in vegetation as the

\* That Italian mountain scenery has less elevation of character than the plains may appear singular; but there are many simple reasons for a fact which, we doubt not, has been felt by every one (capable of feeling anything), who ever left the Alps to pass into Lombardy. The first is, that a mountain scene, as we saw in the last paper, bears no traces of decay, since it never possessed any of life. The desolation of the sterile peaks, never having been interrupted, is altogether free from the melancholy which is consequent on the passing away of interruption. They stood up in the time of Italy's glory, into the voiceless air, while all the life and light which she remembers now was working and moving at their feet, an animated cloud, which they did not feel, and do not miss. That region of life never reached up their flanks, and has left them no memorials of its being; they have no associations, no monuments, no memories; we look on them as we would on other hills; things of abstract and natural magnificence, which the presence of man could not increase, nor his departure sadden. They are, in consequence, destitute of all that renders the name of Ausonia thrilling, or her champaigns beautiful, beyond the mere splendour of climate; and even that splendour is unshared by the mountain; its cold atmosphere being undistinguished by any of that rich, purple, ethereal transparency which gives the air of the plains its *depth of feeling*,—we can find no better expression.

Secondly. In all hill scenery, though there is increase of

plains: both because the soil is scanty, there being, of course, no decomposition going on among the rocks of black marble which form the greater part of the shore; and because the mountains rise steeply from the water, leaving only a narrow zone at their bases in the

size, there is want of distance. We are not speaking of views from summits, but of the average aspect of valleys. Suppose the mountains be 10,000 feet high, their summit will not be more than six miles distant in a direct line: and there is a general sense of confinement, induced by their wall-like boundaries, which is painful, contrasted with the wide expatiation of spirit induced by a distant view over plains. In ordinary countries, however, where the plain is an uninteresting mass of cultivation, the sublimity of distance is not to be compared to that of size: but, where every yard of the cultivated country has its tale to tell; where it is perpetually intersected by rivers whose names are meaning music, and glancing with cities and villages every one of which has its own halo round its head; and where the eye is carried by the clearness of the air over the blue of the farthest horizon, without finding one wreath of mist, or one shadowy cloud, to check the distinctness of the impression; the mental emotions excited are richer, and deeper, and swifter than could be awakened by the noblest hills of the earth, unconnected with the deeds of men.

Lastly. The plain country of Italy has not even to choose between the glory of distance and of size, for it has both. I do not think there is a spot, from Venice to Messina, where two ranges of mountain, at the least, are not in sight at the same time. In Lombardy, the Alps are on one side, the Apennines on the other; in the Venetian territory, the Alps, Apennines and Euganean hills; going southward, the



Looking to  
Lago Maggiore from  
Vogogna - 1846



climate of Italy. In that zone, however, the olive grows in great luxuriance, with the cypress, orange, aloe, myrtle, and vine, the latter always trellised.

104. Now, as to the situation of the cottage, we have already seen that great humility was

Apennines always, their outworks running far towards the sea, and the coast itself frequently mountainous. Now, the aspect of a noble range of hills, at a considerable distance, is, in our opinion, far more imposing (considered in the abstract) than they are, seen near: their height is better told, their outlines softer and more melodious, their majesty more mysterious. But, in Italy, they gain more by distance than majesty: they gain life. They cease to be the cold forgetful things they were; they hold the noble plains in their lap, and become venerable, as having looked down upon them, and watched over them for ever, unchanging; they become part of the picture of associations: we endow them with memory, and then feel them to be possessed of all that is glorious on earth.

For these three reasons, then, the plains of Italy possess far more elevation of character than her hill scenery. To the northward, this contrast is felt very strikingly, as the distinction is well marked, the Alps rising sharply and suddenly. To the southward, the plain is more mingled with low projecting promontories, and unites almost every kind of beauty. However, even among her northern lakes, the richness of the low climate, and the magnificence of form and colour presented by the distant Alps, raise the character of the scene immeasurably above that of most hill landscapes, even were those natural features entirely unassisted by associations which, though more sparingly scattered than in the south, are sufficient to give light to every leaf, and voice to every wave.

necessary, both in the building and its site, to prevent it from offending us by an apparent struggle with forces, compared with which its strength was dust: but we cannot have this extreme humility in the villa, the dwelling of wealth and power, and yet we must not, any more, suggest the idea of its resisting natural influences under which the Pyramids could not abide. The only way of solving the difficulty is, to select such sites as shall seem to have been set aside by nature as places of rest, as points of calm and enduring beauty, ordained to sit and smile in their glory of quietness, while the avalanche brands the mountain top,\* and the torrent desolates the valley; yet so

\* There are two kinds of winter avalanches; the one, sheets of frozen snow sliding on the surface of others. The swiftness of these, as the clavendier of the Convent of St. Bernard told me, he could compare to nothing but that of a cannon ball of equal size. The other is a rolling mass of snow, accumulating in its descent. This, grazing the bare hill-side, tears up its surface like dust, bringing away soil, rock, and vegetation, as a grazing ball tears flesh; and leaving its withered path distinct on the green hill-side, as if the mountain had been branded with red-hot iron. They generally keep to the same paths; but when the snow accumulates, and sends one down the wrong way, it has been known to cut down a pine forest, as a scythe mows grass. The tale of its work is well told by the seared and branded marks on the hill summits and sides.

preserved, not by shelter amidst violence, but by being placed wholly out of the influence of violence. For in this they must differ from the site of the cottage, that the peasant may seek for protection under some low rock or in some narrow dell, but the villa must have a domain to itself, at once conspicuous, beautiful, and calm.

105. As regards the form of the cottage, we have seen how the Westmoreland cottage harmonised with the ease of outline so conspicuous in hill scenery, by the irregularity of its details ; but, here, no such irregularity is allowable or consistent, and is not even desirable. For the cottage enhances the wildness of the surrounding scene, by sympathising with it ; the villa must do the same thing, by contrasting with it. The eye feels, in a far greater degree, the terror of the distant and desolate peaks, when it passes down their ravined sides to sloping and verdant hills, and is guided from these to the rich glow of vegetable life in the low zones, and through this glow to the tall front of some noble edifice, peaceful even in its pride. But this contrast must not be sudden, or it will be startling and harsh ; and therefore,

as we saw above, the villa must be placed where all the severe features of the scene, though not concealed, are distant, and where there is a graduation, so to speak, of impressions, from terror to loveliness, the one softened by distance, the other elevated in its style: and the form of the villa must not be fantastic or angular, but must be full of variety, so tempered by simplicity as to obtain ease of outline united with elevation of character; the first being necessary for reasons before advanced, and the second, that the whole may harmonise with the feelings induced by the lofty features of the accompanying scenery in any hill country, and yet more, on the Larian Lake, by the deep memories and everlasting associations which haunt the stillness of its shore. Of the colour required by Italian landscape we have spoken before, and we shall see that, particularly in this case, white or pale tones are agreeable.

106. We shall now proceed to the situation and form of the villa. As regards situation; the villas of the Lago di Como are built, *par préférence*, either on jutting promontories of low crag covered with olives, or on those



parts of the shore where some mountain stream has carried out a bank of alluvium into the lake. One object proposed in this choice of situation is, to catch the breeze as it comes up the main opening of the hills, and to avoid the reflection of the sun's rays from the rocks of the actual shore; and another is, to obtain a prospect up or down the lake, and of the hills on whose projection the villa is built: but the effect of this choice when the building is considered the object, is to carry it exactly into the place where it ought to be, far from the steep precipice and dark mountain, to the border of the winding bay and citron-scented cape, where it stands at once conspicuous and in peace. For instance, in the view of Villa Serbelloni\* from across the lake, although the eye falls suddenly from the crags above to the promontory

[\* Villa Serbelloni, now the dépendence of the Hôtel Grande Bretagne at Bellaggio, and Villa Somma-Riva, now called Villa Carlotta, at Cadenabbia, and visited by every tourist for its collection of modern statuary, are both too well known to need illustration by the very poor wood-cuts which accompanied this chapter in the "Architectural Magazine." The original drawings are lost; judging from that of the Cottage in Val d'Aosta we may safely believe that they were most inadequately represented by the old cuts.]

below, yet all the sublime and severe features of the scene are kept in the distance, and the villa itself is mingled with graceful lines, and embosomed in rich vegetation. The promontory separates the Lake of Lecco from that of Como, properly so called, and is three miles from the opposite shore, which gives room enough for aërial perspective.

107. We shall now consider the form of the villa. It is generally the apex of a series of artificial terraces, which conduct through its gardens to the water. These are formal in their design, but extensive, wide, and majestic in their slope, the steps being generally about  $\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide (sometimes however much deeper). They are generally supported by white wall, strengthened by unfilled arches, the angles being turned by sculptured pedestals, surmounted by statues, or urns. Along the terraces are carried rows, sometimes of cypress, more frequently of orange or lemon trees, with myrtles, sweet bay, and aloes, intermingled, but always with dark and spiry cypresses occurring in groups; and attached to these terraces, or to the villa itself, are series of arched grottoes built (or sometimes

cut in the rock) for coolness, frequently overhanging the water, kept dark and fresh, and altogether delicious to the feelings. A good instance of these united peculiarities is seen in Villa Somma-Riva, Lago di Como.

The effect of these approaches is disputable. It is displeasing to many, from its formality; but we are persuaded that it is right, because it is a national style, and therefore has in all probability due connexion with scene and character: and this connexion we shall endeavour to prove.

108. The frequent occurrence of the arch is always delightful in distant effect, partly on account of its graceful line, partly because the shade it casts is varied in depth, becoming deeper and deeper as the grotto retires, and partly because it gives great apparent elevation to the walls which it supports. The grottoes themselves are agreeable objects seen near, because they give an impression of coolness to the eye; and they echo all sounds with great melody; small streams are often conducted through them, occasioning slight breezes by their motion. Then the statue and the urn are graceful in their outline.

classical in their meaning, and correct in their position, for where could they be more appropriate than here; the one ministering to memory, and the other to mourning. The terraces themselves are dignified in their character (a necessary effect, as we saw above), and even the formal rows of trees are right in this climate, for a peculiar reason. Effect is always to be considered, in Italy, as if the sun were always to shine, for it does nine days out of ten. Now the shadows of foliage regularly disposed, fall with a grace which it is impossible to describe, running up and down across the marble steps, and casting alternate statues into darkness; and chequering the white walls with a "method in their madness," altogether unattainable by loose grouping of trees; and therefore, for the sake of this kind of shade, to which the eye, as well as the feeling, is attracted, the long row of cypresses or orange trees is allowable.

109. But there is a still more important reason for it, of a directly contrary nature to that which its formality would seem to require. In all beautiful designs of exterior descent, a certain regularity is necessary; the

lines should be graceful, but they must balance each other, slope answering to slope, statue to statue. Now this mathematical regularity would hurt the eye excessively in the midst of scenes of natural grace, were it executed in bare stone; but, if we make part of the design itself foliage, and put in touches of regular shade, alternating with the stone, whose distances and darkness are as mathematically limited as the rest of the grouping, but whose nature is changeful and varied in individual forms, we have obtained a link between nature and art, a step of transition, leading the feelings gradually from the beauty of regularity to that of freedom. And this effect would not be obtained, as might at first appear, by intermingling trees of different kinds, at irregular distances, or wherever they chose to grow; for then the design and the foliage would be instantly separated by the eye, the symmetry of the one would be interrupted, the grace of the other lost; the nobility of the design would not be seen, but its formality would be felt; and the wildness of the trees would be injurious, because it would be felt to be out of place. On principles

of composition, therefore, the regular disposition of decorative foliage is right, when such foliage is mixed with architecture; but it requires great taste, and long study, to design this disposition properly. Trees of dark leaf and little colour should be invariably used, for they are to be considered, it must be remembered, rather as free touches of shade than as trees.

110. Take, for instance, the most simple bit of design, such as a hollow balustrade, and suppose that it is found to look cold or raw, when executed, and to want depth. Then put small pots, with any dark shrub, the darker the better, at fixed places behind them, at the same distance as the balustrades, or between every two or three, and keep them cut down to a certain height, and we have immediate depth and increased ease, with undiminished symmetry. But the great difficulty is to keep the thing within proper limits, since too much of it will lead to paltriness, as is the case in a slight degree in *Isola Bella*, on *Lago Maggiore*; and not to let it run into small details: for, be it remembered, that it is only in the majesty of art, in its large and

general effects, that this regularity is allowable; nothing but variety should be studied in detail, and therefore there can be no barbarism greater than the lozenge borders and beds of the French garden. The scenery around must be naturally rich, that its variety of line may relieve the slight stiffness of the architecture itself: and the climate must always be considered; for, as we saw, the chief beauty of these flights of steps depends upon the presence of the sun; and, if they are to be in shade half the year, the dark trees will only make them gloomy, the grass will grow between the stones of the steps, black weeds will flicker from the pedestals, damp mosses discolour the statues and urns, and the whole will become one incongruous ruin, one ridiculous decay. Besides, the very dignity of its character, even could it be kept in proper order, would be out of place in any country but Italy. Busts of Virgil or Ariosto would look astonished in an English snow storm; statues of Apollo and Diana would be no more divine, where the laurels of the one would be weak, and the crescent of the other would never gleam in pure moonlight.

The whole glory of the design consists in its unison with the dignity of the landscape, and with the classical tone of the country. Take it away from its concomitant circumstances, and, instead of conducting the eye to it by a series of lofty and dreamy impressions, bring it through green lanes, or over copse-covered crags, as would be the case in England, and the whole system becomes utterly and absolutely absurd, ugly in outline, worse than useless in application, unmeaning in design, and incongruous in association

111. It seems, then, that in the approach to the Italian villa, we have discovered great nationality and great beauty, which was more than we could have expected, but a beauty utterly untransferable from its own settled habitation. In our next paper we shall proceed to the building itself, which will not detain us long, as it is generally simple in its design, and take a general view of villa architecture over Italy.

112. We have bestowed considerable attention on this style of Garden Architecture, because it has been much abused by persons of high authority, and general good taste,



who forgot, in their love of grace and ideal beauty, the connexion with surrounding circumstances so manifest even in its formality. Eustace, we think, is one of these; and, although it is an error of a kind he is perpetually committing, he is so far right, that this mannerism is frequently carried into excess even in its own peculiar domain, then becoming disagreeable, and is always a dangerous style in inexperienced hands. We think, however, paradoxical as the opinion may appear, that every one who is a true lover of nature, and has been bred in her wild school, will be an admirer of this symmetrical designing, in its place; and will feel, as often as he contemplates it, that the united effect of the wide and noble steps, with the pure water dashing over them like heated crystal, the long shadows of the cypress groves, the golden leaves and glorious light of blossom of the glancing aloes, the pale statues gleaming along the heights in their everlasting death in life, their motionless brows looking down for ever on the loveliness in which their beings once dwelt, marble forms of more than mortal grace lightening

along the green arcades, amidst dark cool grottoes, full of the voice of dashing waters, and of the breath of myrtle blossoms, with the blue of the deep lake and the distant precipice mingling at every opening with the eternal snows glowing in their noontide silence, is one not unworthy of Italy's most noble remembrances.

## II.

THE MOUNTAIN VILLA—LAGO DI COMO (*continued*).

113. HAVING considered the propriety of the approach, it remains for us to investigate the nature of the feelings excited by the villas of the Lago di Como in particular, and of Italy in general.

We mentioned that the bases of the mountains bordering the Lake of Como were chiefly composed of black marble; black, at least, when polished, and very dark grey in its general effect. This is very finely stratified in beds varying in thickness from an inch to two or three feet; and these beds, taken of a medium thickness, form flat slabs, easily broken into rectangular fragments, which, being excessively compact in their grain, are admirably adapted for a building material. There is a little pale limestone\* among the

\* Pale limestone, with dolomite. A coarse dolomite forms the mass of mountains on the east of Lake Lecco, Monte

hills to the south ; but this marble, or primitive limestone (for it is not highly crystalline), is not only more easy of access, but a more durable stone. Of this, consequently, almost all the buildings on the lake shore are built ; and, therefore, were their material unconcealed, would be of a dark monotonous and melancholy grey tint, equally uninteresting to the eye, and depressing to the mind. To prevent this result, they are covered with different compositions, sometimes white, more frequently cream-coloured, and of varying depth ; the mouldings and pilasters being frequently of deeper tones than the walls. The insides of the grottoes, however, when not cut in the rock itself, are left uncovered, thus forming a strong contrast with the whiteness outside ; giving great depth, and permitting

Campione, &c., and part of the other side, as well as the Monte del Novo, above Cadenabbia ; but the bases of the hills, along the *shore* of the Lake of Lecco, and all the mountains on both sides of the lower limb of Como are black limestone. The whole northern half of the lake is bordered by gneiss or mica slate, with tertiary deposit where torrents enter it. So that the dolomite is only obtainable by ascending the hills, and incurring considerable expense of carriage ; while the rocks of the shore split into blocks of their own accord, and are otherwise an excellent material.

weeds and flowers to root themselves on the roughnesses, and rock streams to distil through the fissures of the dark stones; while all parts of the building to which the eye is drawn, by their form or details (except the capitals of the pilasters), such as the urns, the statues, the steps, or balustrades, are executed in very fine white marble, generally from the quarries of Carrara, which supply quantities of fragments of the finest quality, which nevertheless, owing to their want of size, or to the presence of conspicuous veins, are unavailable for the higher purposes of sculpture.

114. Now, the first question is, is this very pale colour desirable? It is to be hoped so, or else the whole of Italy must be pronounced full of impropriety. The first circumstance in its favour is one which, though connected only with lake scenery, we shall notice at length, as it is a point of high importance in our own country. When a small piece of quiet water reposes in a valley, or lies embosomed among crags, its chief beauty is derived from our perception of crystalline depth, united with excessive slumber. In its limited surface we cannot get the sublimity of extent, but we

may have the beauty of peace, and the majesty of depth. The object must therefore be, to get the eye off its surface, and to draw it down, to beguile it into that fairy land underneath, which is more beautiful than what it repeats, because it is all full of dreams unattainable, and illimitable. This can only be done by keeping its edge out of sight, and guiding the eye off the land into the reflection, as if it were passing into a mist, until it finds itself swimming into the blue sky, with a thrill of unfathomable falling. (If there be not a touch of sky at the bottom, the water will be disagreeably black, and the clearer the more fearful.) Now, one touch of *white* reflection of an object at the edge will destroy the whole illusion, for it will come like the flash of light on armour, and will show the surface, not the depth: it will tell the eye whereabouts it is; will define the limit of the edge; and will turn the dream of limitless depth into a small, uninteresting, reposeless piece of water. In all small lakes or pools, therefore, steep borders of dark crag, or of thick foliage, are to be obtained, if possible; even a shingly shore will spoil them: and

this was one reason, it will be remembered, for our admiration of the colour of the Westmoreland cottage, because it never broke the repose of water by its reflection.

115. But this principle applies only to small pieces of water, on which we look down, as much as along the surface. As soon as we get a sheet, even if only a mile across, we lose depth; first, because it is almost impossible to get the surface without a breeze on some part of it; and, again, because we look along it, and get a great deal of sky in the reflection, which, when occupying too much space, tells as mere flat light. But we may have the beauty of extent in a very high degree; and it is therefore desirable to know how far the water goes, that we may have a clear conception of its space. Now, its border, at a great distance, is always lost, unless it be defined by a very distinct line; and such a line is harsh, flat, and cutting on the eye. To avoid this, the border itself should be dark, as in the other case, so that there may be no continuous horizontal line of demarcation; but one or two bright white objects should be set here and there along or near the edge: their reflections will

flash on the dark water, and will inform the eye in a moment of the whole distance and transparency of the surface it is traversing. When there is a slight swell on the water, they will come down in long, beautiful, perpendicular lines, mingling exquisitely with the streaky green of reflected foliage; when there is none, they become a distant image of the object they repeat, endowed with infinite repose.

116. These remarks, true of small lakes whose edges are green, apply with far greater force to sheets of water on which the eye passes over ten or twenty miles in one long glance, and the prevailing colour of whose borders is, as we noticed when speaking of the Italian cottage, blue. The white reflections are here excessively valuable, giving space, brilliancy, and transparency; and furnish one very powerful apology, even did other objections render an apology necessary, for the pale tone of the colour of the villas, whose reflections, owing to their size and conspicuous situations, always take a considerable part in the scene, and are therefore things to be attentively considered in the erection of such buildings, particularly in a climate whose



calmness renders its lakes quiet for the greater part of the day. Nothing, in fact, can be more beautiful than the intermingling of these bright lines with the darkness of the reversed cypresses seen against the deep azure of the distant hills in the crystalline waters of the lake, of which some one aptly says, "Deep within its azure rest, white villages sleep silently;"\* or than their columnar perspective, as village after village catches the light, and strikes the image to the very quietest recess of the narrow water, and the very farthest hollow of the folded hills.

117. From all this, it appears that the effect of the white villa in water is delightful. On land it is quite as important, but more doubtful. The first objection, which strikes us instantly when we *imagine* such a building, is the want of repose, the startling glare of effect, induced by its unsubdued tint. But this objection does not strike us when we *see* the building; a circumstance which was partly accounted for before, in speaking of the cottage, and which

[\* A reminiscence of two lines from a poem on the "Lago di Como" written by the author in 1833, and printed in "The Poems of John Ruskin," 1891; vol. i. p. 148.]

we shall presently see farther cause not to be surprised at. A more important objection is, that such whiteness destroys a great deal of venerable character, and harmonises ill with the melancholy tones of surrounding landscape : and this requires detailed consideration.

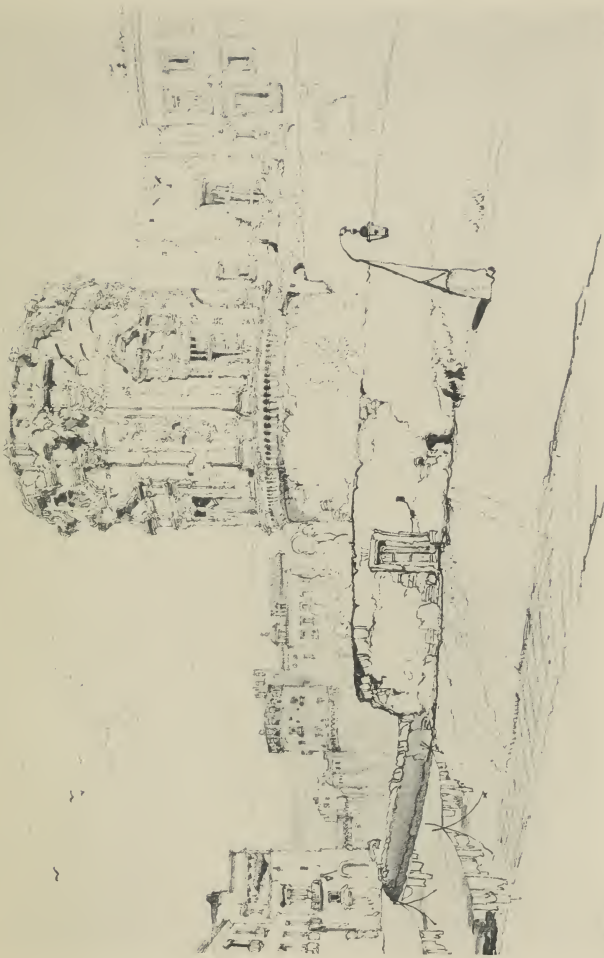
118. Paleness of colour destroys the majesty of a building ; first, by hinting at a disguised and humble material ; and, secondly, by taking away all appearance of age. We shall speak of the effect of the material presently ; but the deprivation of apparent antiquity is dependent in a great degree on the colour ; and in Italy, where, as we saw before, everything ought to point to the past, is serious injury, though, for several reasons, not so fatal as might be imagined ; for we do not require, in a building raised as a light summer-house, wherein to while away a few pleasure hours, the evidence of ancestral dignity, without which the château or palace can possess hardly any beauty. We know that it is originally built more as a play-thing than as a monument ; as the delight of an individual, not the possession of a race ; and that the very lightness and carelessness of feeling with which such a domicile is entered

and inhabited by its first builder would demand, to sympathize and keep in unison with them, not the kind of building adapted to excite the veneration of ages, but that which can most gaily minister to the amusement of hours. For all men desire to have memorials of their actions, but none of their recreations ; inasmuch as we only wish that to be remembered which others will not, or cannot perform or experience ; and we know that all men can enjoy recreation as much as ourselves. We wish succeeding generations to admire our energy, but not even to be aware of our lassitude ; to know when we moved, but not when we rested ; how we ruled, not how we condescended ; and, therefore, in the case of the triumphal arch, or the hereditary palace, if we are the builders, we desire stability ; if the beholders, we are offended with novelty : but in the case of the villa, the builder desires only a correspondence with his humour ; the beholder, evidence of such correspondence ; for he feels that the villa is most beautiful when it ministers most to pleasure ; that it cannot minister to pleasure without perpetual change, so as to suit the varying ideas, and humours, and imaginations of its inhabitant,

and that it cannot possess this light and variable habit with any appearance of antiquity.

119. And, for a yet more important reason, such appearance is not desirable. Melancholy, when it is productive of pleasure, is accompanied either by loveliness in the object exciting it, or by a feeling of pride in the mind experiencing it. Without one of these, it becomes absolute pain, which all men throw off as soon as they can, and suffer under as long as their minds are too weak for the effort. Now, when it is accompanied by loveliness in the object exciting it, it forms beauty; when by a feeling of pride, it constitutes the pleasure we experience in tragedy, when we have the pride of endurance, or in contemplating the ruin, or the monument, by which we are informed or reminded of the pride of the past. Hence, it appears that age is beautiful only when it is the decay of glory or of power, and memory only delightful when it reposes upon pride.\*

\* Observe, we are not speaking of emotions felt on remembering what we ourselves have enjoyed, for then the imagination is productive of pleasure by replacing us in enjoyment, but of the feelings excited in the *indifferent* spectator, by the evident decay of power or desolation of enjoyment, of which the first ennobles, the other only harrows, the spirit.



Allen & Co. Sc.

At Naples, 1841

1841 km



All remains therefore of what was merely devoted to pleasure ; all evidence of lost enjoyment ; all memorials of the recreation and rest of the departed ; in a word, all desolation of delight is productive of mere pain, for there is no feeling of exultation connected with it. Thus, in any ancient habitation, we pass with reverence and pleasurable emotion through the ordered armoury, where the lances lie, with none to wield ; through the lofty hall, where the crested scutcheons glow with the honour of the dead : but we turn sickly away from the arbour which has no hand to tend it, and the boudoir which has no life to lighten it, and the smooth sward which has no light feet to dance on it. So it is in the villa : the more memory, the more sorrow ; and, therefore, the less adaptation to its present purpose. But, though cheerful, it should be ethereal in its expression : “ spiritual ” is a good word, giving ideas of the very highest order of delight that can be obtained in the mere present.

120. It seems, then, that for all these reasons an appearance of age is not desirable, far less necessary, in the villa ; but its existing character must be in unison with its

country; and it must appear to be inhabited by one brought up in that country, and imbued with its national feelings. In Italy, especially, though we can even here dispense with one component part of elevation of character,—age, we must have all the others: we must have high feeling, beauty of form, and depth of effect, or the thing will be a barbarism; the inhabitant must be an Italian, full of imagination and emotion: a villa inhabited by an Englishman, no matter how close its imitation of others, will always be preposterous.

We find, therefore, that white is not to be blamed in the villa for destroying its antiquity; neither is it reprehensible, as harmonising ill with the surrounding landscape: on the contrary, it adds to its brilliancy, without taking away from its depth of tone. We shall consider it as an element of landscape, more particularly, when we come to speak of grouping.

121. There remains only one accusation to be answered; viz., that it hints at a paltry and unsubstantial material: and this leads us to the second question, Is this material



allowable? If it were distinctly felt by the eye to be stucco, there could be no question about the matter, it would be decidedly disagreeable; but all the parts to which the eye is attracted are executed in marble, and the stucco merely forms the dead flat of the building, not a single wreath of ornament being formed of it. Its surface is smooth and bright, and altogether avoids what a stone building, when not built of large masses, and uncharged with ornament, always forces upon the attention, the rectangular lines of the blocks, which, however nicely fitted they may be, are "horrible! most horrible!" There is also a great deal of ease and softness in the angular lines of the stucco, which are never sharp or harsh, like those of stone; and it receives shadows with great beauty, a point of infinite importance in this climate; giving them lightness and transparency, without any diminution of depth. It is also agreeable to the eye, to pass from the sharp carving of the marble decorations to the ease and smoothness of the stucco; while the utter want of interest in those parts which are executed in it prevents the humility of the material from being

offensive: for this passage of the eye from the marble to the composition is managed with the dexterity of the artist, who, that the attention may be drawn to the single point of the picture which is his subject, leaves the rest so obscured and slightly painted, that the mind loses it altogether in its attention to the principal feature.

122. With all, however, that can be alleged in extenuation of its faults, it cannot be denied that the stucco *does* take away so much of the dignity of the building, that, unless we find enough bestowed by its form and details to counterbalance, and a great deal more than counterbalance, the deterioration occasioned by tone and material, the whole edifice must be condemned, as incongruous with the spirit of the climate, and even with the character of its own gardens and approach. It remains, therefore, to notice the details themselves. Its form is simple to a degree; the roof generally quite flat, so as to leave the mass in the form of a parallelopiped, in general without wings or adjuncts of any sort. Villa Somma-Riva [Carlotta] is a good example of this general form and proportion, though it has

an arched passage on each side, which takes away from its massiness. This excessive weight of effect would be injurious, if the building were set by itself; but, as it always forms the apex of a series of complicated terraces, it both relieves them and gains great dignity by its own unbroken simplicity of size. This general effect of form is not injured, when, as is often the case, an open passage is left in the centre of the building, under tall and well-proportioned arches, supported by pilasters (never by columns). Villa Porro, Lago di Como, is a good example of this method. The arches hardly ever exceed three in number, and these are all of the same size, so that the crowns of the arches continue the horizontal lines of the rest of the building. Were the centre one higher than the others, these lines would be interrupted, and a great deal of simplicity lost. The covered space under these arches is a delightful, shaded, and breezy retreat in the heat of the day; and the entrance doors usually open into it, so that a current of cool air is obtainable by throwing them open.

123. The building itself consists of three

floors : we remember no instance of a greater number, and only one or two of fewer. It is, in general, crowned with a light balustrade, surmounted by statues at intervals. The windows of the uppermost floor are usually square, often without any architrave. Those of the principal floor are surrounded with broad architraves, but are frequently destitute of frieze or cornice. They have usually flat bands at the bottom, and their aperture is a double square. Their recess is very deep, so as not to let the sun fall far into the interior. The interval between them is very variable. In some of the villas of highest pretensions, such as those on the banks of the Brenta, that of Isola Bella, and others, which do not face the south, it is not much more than the breadth of the two architraves, so that the rooms within are filled with light. When this is the case, the windows have friezes and cornices. But, when the building fronts the south, the interval is often very great, as in the case of the Villa Porro. The ground-floor windows are frequently set in tall arches, supported on deeply engaged pilasters as in the Villa Somma-Riva. The door is not

large, and never entered by high steps, as it generally opens on a terrace of considerable height, or on a wide landing-place at the head of a flight of fifty or sixty steps descending through the gardens.

124. Now, it will be observed, that, in these general forms, though there is no splendour, there is great dignity. The lines throughout are simple to a degree, entirely uninterrupted by decorations of any kind, so that the beauty of their proportions is left visible and evident. We shall see hereafter that ornament in Grecian architecture, while, when well managed, it always adds to its grace, invariably takes away from its majesty; and that these two attributes never can exist together in their highest degrees. By the utter absence of decoration, therefore, the Italian villa, possessing, as it usually does, great beauty of proportion, attains a degree of elevation of character, which impresses the mind in a manner which it finds difficult to account for by any consideration of its simple details or moderate size; while, at the same time, it lays so little claim to the attention, and is so subdued in its character, that it is enabled to

occupy a conspicuous place in a landscape, without any appearance of intrusion. The glance of the beholder rises from the labyrinth of terrace and arbour beneath, almost weariedly; it meets, as it ascends, with a gradual increase of bright marble and simple light, and with a proportionate diminution of dark foliage and complicated shadow, till it rests finally on a piece of simple brilliancy, chaste and unpretending, yet singularly dignified; and does not find its colour too harsh, because its form is so simple: for colour of any kind is only injurious when the eye is too much attracted to it; and, when there is so much quietness of detail as to prevent this misfortune, the building will possess the cheerfulness, without losing the tranquillity, and will seem to have been erected, and to be inhabited, by a mind of that beautiful temperament wherein modesty tempers majesty, and gentleness mingles with rejoicing, which, above all others, is most suited to the essence, and most interwoven with the spirit, of the natural beauty whose peculiar power is invariably repose.

125. So much for its general character.

Considered by principles of composition, it will also be found beautiful. Its prevailing lines are horizontal; and every artist knows that, where peaks of any kind are in sight, the lines above which they rise ought to be flat. It has not one acute angle in all its details, and very few intersections of verticals with horizontals; while all that do intersect seem useful as supporting the mass. The just application of the statues at the top is more doubtful, and is considered reprehensible by several high authorities, who, nevertheless, are inconsistent enough to let the balustrade pass uncalumniated, though it is objectionable on exactly the same grounds; for, if the statues suggest the enquiry of "What are they doing there?" the balustrade compels its beholder to ask, "whom it keeps from tumbling over?"

126. The truth is, that the balustrade and statues derive their origin from a period when there was easy access to the roof of either temple or villa; (that there was such access is proved by a passage in the *Iphigenia Taurica*, line 113, where Orestes speaks of getting up to the triglyphs of a Doric temple

as an easy matter;) and when the flat roofs were used, not, perhaps, as an evening promenade, as in Palestine, but as a place of observation, and occasionally of defence. They were composed of large flat slabs of stone (*κέραμος*,\*) peculiarly adapted for walking, one or two of which, when taken up, left an opening of easy access into the house, as in Luke v. 19, and were perpetually used in Greece as missile weapons, in the event of a hostile attack or sedition in the city, by parties of old men, women, and children, who used, as a matter of course, to retire to the roof as a place of convenient defence. By such attacks from the roof with the *κέραμος* the Thebans were thrown into confusion in Plataea (*Thucydides* ii. 4.) So, also, we find the roof immediately resorted to in the case of the starving of Pausanias in the Temple

\* In the large buildings, that is: *κέραμος* also signifies earthen tiling, and sometimes earthenware in general, as in *Herodotus* iii. 6 [where it is used of earthen jars of wine.] It appears that such tiling was frequently used in smaller edifices. The Greeks may have derived their flat roofs from Egypt. Herodotus mentions of the Labyrinth of the Twelve Kings, that *ὄροφὴ δὲ πάντων τούτων λιθίνη*, but not as if the circumstance were in the least extraordinary [*Herodotus* ii. 148.]



of Minerva of the Brazen House, and in that of the massacre of the aristocratic party at Corcyra (*Thucydides* iv. 48):—'Αναβάντες δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ τέγος τοῦ οἰκήματος, καὶ διελόντες τὴν ὄροφὴν, ἔβαλλον τῷ κεράμῳ.

127. Now, where the roof was thus a place of frequent resort, there could be no more useful decoration than a balustrade; nor one more appropriate or beautiful than occasional statues in attitudes of watchfulness, expectation, or observation: and even now, wherever the roof is flat, we have an idea of convenience and facility of access, which still renders the balustrade agreeable, and the statue beautiful, if well designed. It must not be a figure of perfect peace or repose; far less should it be in violent action: but it should be fixed in that quick, startled stillness, which is the result of intent observation or expectation, and which seems ready to start into motion every instant. Its height should be slightly colossal, as it is always to be seen against the sky; and its draperies should not be too heavy, as the eye will always expect them to be caught by the wind. We shall enter into this subject, however, more fully hereafter. We only wish at

present to vindicate from the charge of impropriety one of the chief features of the Italian villa. Its white figures, always marble, remain entirely unsullied by the weather, and stand out with great majesty against the blue air behind them, taking away from the heaviness, without destroying the simplicity, of the general form.

128. It seems then that, by its form and details, the villa of the Lago di Como attains so high a degree of elevation of character, as not only brings it into harmony of its *locus*, without any assistance from appearance of antiquity, but may, we think, permit it to dispense even with solidity of material, and appear in light summer stucco, instead of raising itself in imperishable marble. And this conclusion, which is merely theoretical, is verified by fact: for we remember no instance, except in cases where poverty had overpowered pretension, or decay had turned rejoicing into silence, in which the lightness of the material was offensive to the feelings; in all cases, it is agreeable to the eye. Where it is allowed to get worn, and discoloured, and broken, it induces a wretched mockery of the dignified

form which it preserves ; but, as long as it is renewed at proper periods, and watched over by the eye of its inhabitant, it is an excellent and easily managed medium of effect.

129. With all the praise, however, which we have bestowed upon it, we do not say that the villa of the Larian Lake is perfection ; indeed we cannot say so, until we have compared it with a few other instances, chiefly to be found in Italy, on whose soil we delay, as being the native country of the villa, properly so called, and as ever yet being almost the only spot of Europe where any good specimens of it are to be found ; for we do not understand by the term “ villa ” a cubic erection, with one window on each side of a verdant door, and three on the second and uppermost story, such as the word suggests to the fertile imagination of ruralising cheesemongers ; neither do we understand the quiet and unpretending country house of a respectable gentleman ; neither do we understand such a magnificent mass of hereditary stone as generally forms the autumn retreat of an English noble ; but we understand the light but elaborate summer habitation, raised however and wherever it pleases his

fancy, by some individual of great wealth and influence, who can enrich it with every attribute of beauty; furnish it with every appurtenance of pleasure; and repose in it with the dignity of a mind trained to exertion or authority. Such a building could not exist in Greece, where every district a mile and a quarter square was quarrelling with all its neighbours. It could exist, and did exist, in Italy, where the Roman power secured tranquillity, and the Roman constitution distributed its authority among a great number of individuals, on whom, while it raised them to a position of great influence, and, in its later times, of wealth, it did not bestow the power of raising palaces or private fortresses. The villa was their peculiar habitation, their only resource, and a most agreeable one; because the multitudes of the kingdom being, for a long period, confined to a narrow territory, though ruling the world, rendered the population of the city so dense, as to drive out its higher ranks to the neighbouring hamlets of Tibur and Tusculum.

130. In other districts of Europe the villa is not found, because in very perfect monarchies,





Towers, Chambéry

as in Austria, the power is thrown chiefly into the hands of a few, who build themselves palaces, not villas; and in perfect republics, as in Switzerland, the power is so split among the multitude, that nobody can build himself anything. In general, in kingdoms of great extent, the country house becomes the permanent and hereditary habitation; and the villas are all crowded together, and form gingerbread rows in the environs of the capital; and, in France and Germany, the excessively disturbed state of affairs in the middle ages compelled every baron or noble to defend himself, and retaliate on his neighbours as he best could, till the villa was lost in the château and the fortress; and men now continue to build as their forefathers built (and long may they do so), surrounding the domicile of pleasure with a moat and a glacis, and guarding its garret windows with turrets and towers: while, in England, the nobles, comparatively few, and of great power, inhabit palaces, not villas; and the rest of the population is chiefly crowded into cities, in the activity of commerce, or dispersed over estates in that of agriculture; leaving only one grade of gentry, who have

neither the taste to desire, nor the power to erect, the villa, properly so called.

131. We must not, therefore, be surprised if, on leaving Italy, where the crowd of poverty-stricken nobility can still repose their pride in the true villa, we find no farther examples of it worthy of consideration; though we hope to have far greater pleasure in contemplating its substitutes, the *château* and the fortress. We must be excused, therefore, for devoting one paper more to the state of villa architecture in Italy; after which we shall endeavour to apply the principles we shall have deduced to the correction of some abuses in the erection of English country houses, in cases where scenery would demand beauty of design, and wealth permit finish of decoration.



### III.

#### THE ITALIAN VILLA (*concluded*).

132. WE do not think there is any truth in the aphorism, now so frequently advanced in England, that the adaptation of shelter to the corporal comfort of the human race is the original and true end of the art of architecture, properly so called: for, were such the case, he would be the most distinguished architect who was best acquainted with the properties of cement, with the nature of stone, and the various durability of wood. That such knowledge is necessary to the perfect architect we do not deny; but it is no more the end and purpose of his application, than a knowledge of the alphabet is the object of the refined scholar, or of rhythm of the inspired poet.

133. For, supposing that we were for a moment to consider that we built a house *merely* to be lived in, and that the whole bent

of our invention, in raising the edifice, is to be directed to the provision of comfort for the life to be spent therein; supposing that we build it with the most perfect dryness and coolness of cellar, the most luxurious appurtenances of pantry; that we build our walls with the most compacted strength of material, the most studied economy of space; that we leave not a chink in the floor for a breath of wind to pass through, not a hinge in the door, which, by any possible exertion of its irritable muscles, could creak; that we elevate our chambers into exquisite coolness, furnish them with every attention to the maintenance of general health, as well as the prevention of present inconvenience: to do all this, we must be possessed of great knowledge and various skill; let this knowledge and skill be applied with the greatest energy, and what have they done? Exactly as much as brute animals can do by mere instinct; nothing more than bees and beavers, moles and magpies, ants and earwigs, do every day of their lives, without the slightest effort of reason; we have made ourselves superior as architects to the most degraded animation of the universe, only inasmuch as

we have lavished the highest efforts of intellect, to do what they have done with the most limited sensations that can constitute life.

134. The mere preparation of convenience, therefore, is not architecture in which man can take pride, or ought to take delight;\* but the high and ennobling art of architecture is that of giving to buildings, whose parts are determined by necessity, such forms and colours as shall delight the mind, by preparing it for the operations to which it is to be subjected in the building: and thus, as it is altogether to the mind that the work of the architect is addressed, it is not as a part of his art, but as a limitation of its extent, that he must be acquainted with the minor principles of the economy of domestic erections. For this reason, though we shall notice every class of edifice, it does not come within our proposed plan, to enter into any detailed consideration of the inferior buildings of each class, which afford no scope for the play of the imagination by their nature or size; but we shall generally select the

[\* Compare "The Seven Lamps of Architecture," chap. i. § 1.]

most perfect and beautiful examples, as those in which alone the architect has the power of fulfilling the high purposes of his art. In the villa, however, some exception must be made, inasmuch as it will be useful, and perhaps interesting, to arrive at some fixed conclusions respecting the modern buildings, improperly called villas, raised by moderate wealth, and of limited size, in which the architect is compelled to produce his effect without extent or decoration. The principles which we have hitherto arrived at, deduced as they are from edifices of the noblest character, will be but of little use to a country gentleman, about to insinuate himself and his habitation into a quiet corner of our lovely country; and, therefore, we must glance at the more humble homes of the Italian, preparatory to the consideration of what will best suit our own less elevated scenery.

135. First, then, we lose the terraced approach, or, at least, its size and splendour, as these require great wealth to erect them, and perpetual expense to preserve them. For the chain of terraces we find substituted a simple garden, somewhat formally laid out;

but redeemed from the charge of meanness by the nobility and size attained by most of its trees; the line of immense cypresses which generally surrounds it in part, and the luxuriance of the vegetation of its flowering shrubs. It has frequently a large entrance gate, well designed, but carelessly executed; sometimes singularly adorned with fragments of ancient sculpture, regularly introduced, which the spectator partly laments, as preserved in a mode so incongruous with their ancient meaning, and partly rejoices over, as preserved at all. The grottoes of the superior garden are here replaced by light ranges of arched summer-houses, designed in stucco, and occasionally adorned in their interior with fresco paintings of considerable brightness and beauty.

136. All this, however, has very little effect in introducing the eye to the villa itself, owing to the general want of inequality of level in the ground, so that the main building becomes an independent feature, instead of forming the apex of a mass of various architecture. Consequently, the weight of form which in the former case it might, and even ought to, possess, would here be cumbrous,

ugly, and improper; and accordingly we find it got rid of. This is done, first by the addition of the square tower, a feature which is not allowed to break in upon the symmetry of buildings of high architectural pretensions; but is immediately introduced, whenever less richness of detail, or variety of approach, demands or admits of irregularity of form. It is a constant and most important feature in Italian landscape; sometimes high and apparently detached, as when it belongs to sacred edifices; sometimes low and strong, united with the mass of the fortress, or varying the form of the villa. It is always simple in its design, flat-roofed, its corners being turned by very slightly projecting pilasters, which are carried up the whole height of the tower, whatever it may be, without any regard to proportion, terminating in two arches on each side, in the villa most frequently filled up, though their curve is still distinguished by darker tint and slight relief. Two black holes on each side, near the top, are very often the only entrances by which light or sun can penetrate. These are seldom actually large, always propor-

tionably small, and destitute of ornament or relief.

137. The forms of the villas to which these towers are attached are straggling, and varied by many crossing masses; but the great principle of simplicity is always kept in view; everything is square, and terminated by parallel lines; no tall chimneys, no conical roofs, no fantastic ornaments are ever admitted: the arch alone is allowed to relieve the stiffness of the general effect. This is introduced frequently, but not in the windows, which are either squares or double squares, at great distances from each other, set deeply into the walls and only adorned with broad flat borders. Where more light is required they are set moderately close, and protected by an outer line of arches, deep enough to keep the noon-day sun from entering the rooms. These lines of arches cast soft shadows along the bright fronts, and are otherwise of great value. Their effect is pretty well seen in fig. 10; a piece which, while it has no distinguished beauty, is yet pleasing by its entire simplicity; and peculiarly so, when we know that simplicity to have been chosen (some say, built)

for its last and lonely habitation, by a mind of softest passion as of purest thought; and to have sheltered its silent old age among the blue and quiet hills, till it passed away like a deep lost melody from the earth, leaving a light of peace about the grey tomb at which the steps of those who pass by always falter, and around this deserted, and decaying, and calm habitation of the thoughts of the departed; Petrarch's, at Arquà. A more familiar instance of the application of these arches is the Villa of Mecænas at Tivoli, though it is improperly styled a villa, being pretty well known to have been nothing but stables.

138. The buttress is the only remaining point worthy of notice. It prevails to a considerable extent among the villas of the south, being always broad and tall, and occasionally so frequent as to give the building, viewed laterally, a pyramidal and cumbrous effect. The most usual form is that of a simple sloped mass, terminating in the wall, without the slightest finishing, and rising at an angle of about  $84^{\circ}$ . Sometimes it is perpendicular, sloped at the top into the wall; but it never has steps of increasing projection as it goes



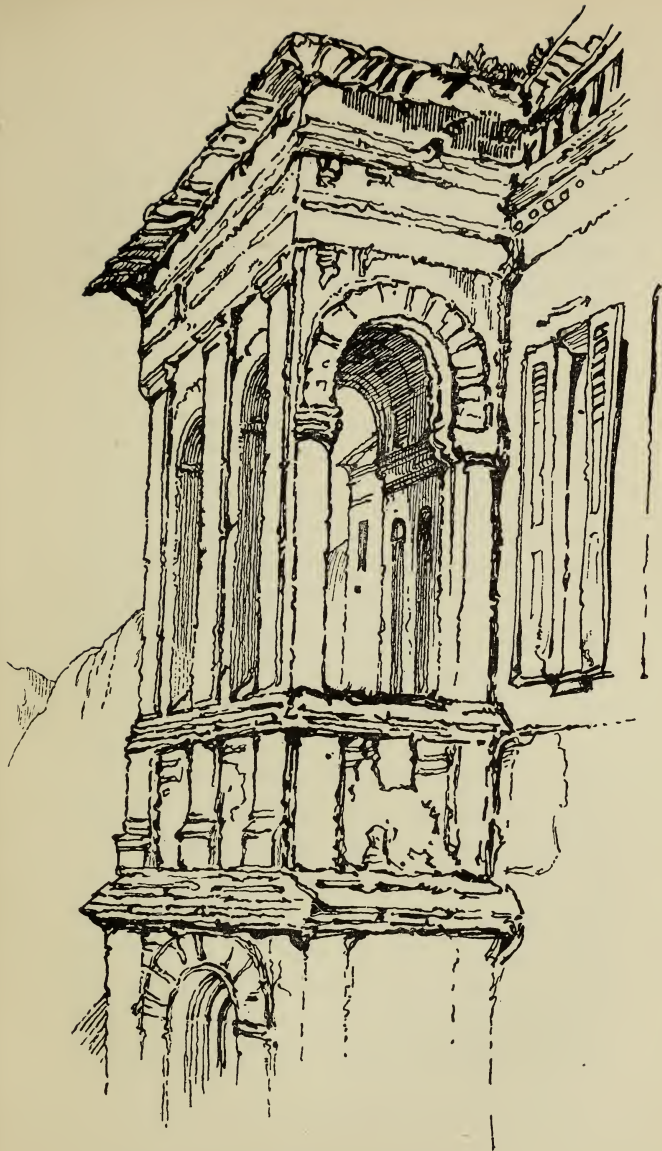


FIG. 10. Petrarch's Villa ; Arquà. —1837.

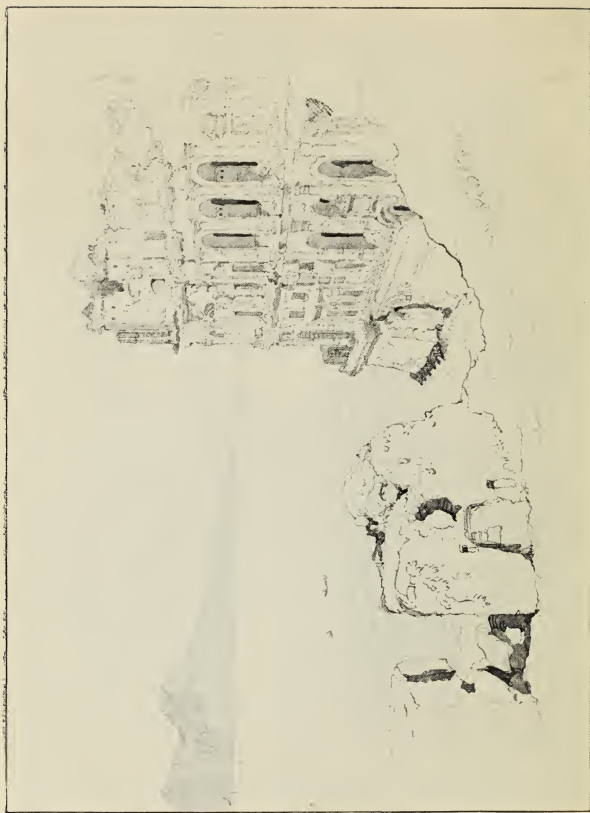


down. By observing the occurrence of these buttresses, an architect, who knew nothing of geology, might accurately determine the points of most energetic volcanic action in Italy; for their use is to protect the building from the injuries of earthquakes, the Italian having far too much good taste to use them, except in cases of extreme necessity. Thus, they are never found in North Italy, even in the fortresses. They begin to occur among the Apennines, south of Florence; they become more and more frequent and massy towards Rome; in the neighbourhood of Naples they are huge and multitudinous, even the walls themselves being sometimes sloped; and the same state of things continues as we go south, on the coast of Calabria and Sicily.

139. Now, these buttresses present one of the most extraordinary and striking instances of the beauty of adaptation of style to locality and peculiarity of circumstance, that can be met with in the whole range of architectural investigation. Taken in the abstract, they are utterly detestable, formal, clumsy, and apparently unnecessary. Their builder thinks so himself: he hates them as things to be

looked at, though he erects them as things to be depended upon. He has no idea that there is any propriety in their presence, though he knows perfectly well that there is a great deal of necessity; and, therefore he builds them. Where? On rocks whose sides are one mass of buttresses, of precisely the same form; on rocks which are cut and cloven by basalt and lava dikes of every size, and which, being themselves secondary, wear away gradually by exposure to the atmosphere, leaving the intersecting dikes standing out in solid and vertical walls, from the faces of their precipices. The eye passes over heaps of scoriæ and sloping banks of ashes, over the huge ruins of more ancient masses, till it trembles for the fate of the crags still standing round; but it finds them ribbed with basalt like bones, buttressed with a thousand lava walls, propped upon pedestals and pyramids of iron, which the pant and the pulse of the earthquake itself can scarcely move, for they are its own work; it climbs up to their summits, and there it finds the work of man; but it is no puny domicile, no eggshell imagination, it is in a continuation of the mountain itself, inclined at the same





J Ruskin

Bay of Naples

1841

p. 191

slope, ribbed in the same manner, protected by the same means against the same danger; not, indeed, filling the eye with delight, but, which is of more importance, freeing it from fear, and beautifully corresponding with the prevalent lines around it, which a less massive form would have rendered, in some cases, particularly about Etna, even ghastly. Even in the long and luxuriant views from Capo di Monte, and the heights to the east of Naples, the spectator looks over a series of volcanic eminences, generally, indeed, covered with rich verdure, but starting out here and there in grey and worn walls, fixed at a regular slope, and breaking away into masses more and more rugged towards Vesuvius, till the eye gets thoroughly habituated to their fortress-like outlines.

140. Throughout the whole of this broken country, and, on the summits of these volcanic cones, rise innumerable villas; but they do not offend us, as we should have expected, by their attestation of cheerfulness of life amidst the wrecks left by destructive operation, nor hurt the eye by non-assimilation with the immediate features of the landscape: but they

seem to rise prepared and adapted for resistance to, and endurance of, the circumstances of their position; to be inhabited by beings of energy and force sufficient to decree and to carry on a steady struggle with opposing elements, and of taste and feeling sufficient to proportion the form of the walls of men to the clefts in the flanks of the volcano, and to prevent the exultation and the lightness of transitory life from startling, like a mockery, the eternal remains of disguised desolation.

141. We have always considered these circumstances as most remarkable proofs of the perfect dependence of architecture on its situation, and of the utter impossibility of judging of the beauty of any building in the abstract: and we would also lay much stress upon them, as showing with what boldness the designer may introduce into his building, undisguised, such parts as local circumstances render desirable; for there will invariably be something in the nature of that which causes their necessity, which will endow them with beauty.

142. These, then, are the principal features of the Italian villa, modifications of which, of course more or less dignified in size, material



or decoration, in proportion to the power and possessions of their proprietor, may be considered as composing every building of that class in Italy. A few remarks on their general effect will enable us to conclude the subject.

143. We have been so long accustomed to see the horizontal lines and simple forms which, as we have observed, still prevail among the Ausonian villas, used with the greatest dexterity, and the noblest effect, in the compositions of Claude, Salvator, and Poussin—and so habituated to consider these compositions as perfect models of the beautiful, as well as the pure in taste—that it is difficult to divest ourselves of prejudice, in the contemplation of the sources from which those masters received their education, their feelings, and their subjects. We would hope, however, and we think it may be proved, that in this case principle assists and encourages prejudice. First, referring only to the gratification afforded to the eye, which we know to depend upon fixed mathematical principles, though those principles are not always developed, it is to be observed, that country is always most beautiful when it is made up of curves, and

that one of the chief characters of Ausonian landscape is the perfection of its curvatures, induced by the gradual undulation of promontories into the plains. In suiting architecture to such a country, that building which least interrupts the curve on which it is placed will be felt to be most delightful to the eye.

144. Let us take then the simple form  $a b c d$ , interrupting the curve  $c e$  [fig. 11, A.] Now, the eye will always continue the principal lines of such an object for itself, until they cut the main curve; that is, it will carry on  $a b$  to  $e$ , and the total effect of the interruption will be that of the form  $c d e$ . Had the line  $b d$  been nearer to  $a c$ , the effect would have been just the same. Now, every curve may be considered as composed of an infinite number of lines at right angles to each other, as  $m n$  is made up of  $o p, p q$ , etc., (fig. B), whose ratio to each other varies with the direction of the curve. Then, if the right lines which form the curve at  $c$  (fig. A) be increased, we have the figure  $c d e$ , that is, the apparent interruption of the curve is an increased part of the curve itself. To the mathematical reader we can explain our meaning more clearly, by

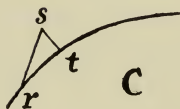
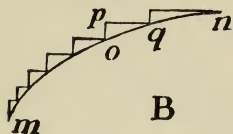
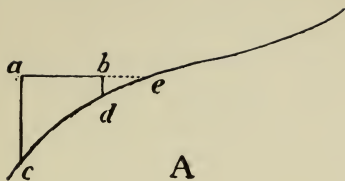


FIG. 11. Broken Curves.



pointing out that, taking  $c$  for our origin, we have  $a c$ ,  $a e$ , for the co-ordinates of  $e$ , and that, therefore, their ratio is the equation to the curve. Whence it appears, that, when any curve is broken in upon by a building composed of simple vertical and horizontal lines, the eye is furnished, by the interruption, with the equation to that part of the curve which is interrupted. If, instead of square forms, we take obliquity, as  $r s t$  (fig. C), we have one line,  $s t$ , an absolute break, and the other  $r s$ , in false proportion. If we take another curve, we have an infinite number of lines, only two of which are where they ought to be. And this is the true reason for the constant introduction of features which appear to be somewhat formal, into the most perfect imaginations of the old masters, and the true cause of the extreme beauty of the groups formed by Italian villages in general.

145. Thus much for the mere effect on the eye. Of correspondence with national character, we have shown that we must not be disappointed, if we find little in the villa. The unfrequency of windows in the body of the building is partly attributed to the climate;

but the total exclusion of light from some parts, as the base of the central tower, carries our thoughts back to the ancient system of Italian life, when every man's home had its dark, secret places, the abodes of his worst passions; whose shadows were alone intrusted with the motion of his thoughts; whose walls became the whited sepulchres of crime; whose echoes were never stirred except by such words as they dared not repeat;\* from which the rod of power, or the dagger of passion, came forth invisible; before whose stillness princes grew pale, as their fates were prophesied or fulfilled by the horoscope or the hemlock; and nations, as the whisper of anarchy or of heresy was avenged by the opening of the low doors, through which those who entered returned not.

146. The mind of the Italian, sweet and smiling in its operations, deep and silent in its emotions, was thus, in some degree, typified by those abodes into which he was wont to retire from the tumult and wrath of life, to

\* Shelley has caught the feeling finely:—"The house is penetrated to its corners by the peeping insolence of the day. When the time comes the crickets shall not see me."—*Cenci* [Act. II. scene 1, quoted from memory.]

cherish or to gratify the passions which its struggles had excited ; abodes which now gleam brightly and purely among the azure mountains, and by the sapphire sea, but whose stones are dropped with blood ; whose vaults are black with the memory of guilt and grief unpunished and unavenged, and by whose walls the traveller hastens fearfully, when the sun has set, lest he should hear, awakening again through the horror of their chambers, the faint wail of the children of Ugolino,\* the ominous alarm of Bonatti, or the long low cry of her who perished at Coll' Alto.

OXFORD, July 1838.

[\* Ugolino ; Dante, *Inferno* xxxiii. Guido Bonatti, the astrologer of Forli, *Inferno* xx., 118. The lady who perished at Coll' Alto, *i.e.* the higher part of Colle di Val d'Elsa, between Siena and Volterra—was Sapia ; *Purgatorio*, xiii. 100-154.]

## IV.

### THE LOWLAND VILLA—ENGLAND.

147. ALTHOUGH, as we have frequently observed, our chief object in these papers is, to discover the connexion existing between national architecture and character, and therefore is one leading us rather to the investigation of what is, than of what ought to be, we yet consider that the subject would be imperfectly treated, if we did not, at the conclusion of the consideration of each particular rank of building, endeavour to apply such principles as may have been demonstrated to the architecture of our country, and to discover the *beau idéal* of English character, which should be preserved through all the decorations which the builder may desire, and through every variety which fancy may suggest. There never was, and never can be, a universal *beau idéal* in architecture, and the arrival at



all local models of beauty would be the task of ages; but we can always, in some degree, determine those of our own lovely country. We cannot, however, in the present case, pass from the contemplation of the villa of a totally different climate, to the investigation of what is beautiful here, without the slightest reference to styles now or formerly adopted for our own "villas," if such they are to be called; and therefore it will be necessary to devote a short time to the observance of the peculiarities of such styles, if we possess them; or, if not, of the causes of their absence.

148. We have therefore headed this paper "The Villa, England;" awakening, without doubt, a different idea in the mind of every one who reads the words. Some, accustomed to the appearance of metropolitan villas, will think of brick buildings, with infinite appurtenances of black nicked chimney-pots, and plastered fronts, agreeably varied with graceful cracks, and undulatory shades of pink, brown, and green, communicated to the cement by smoky showers. Others will imagine large, square, many-windowed masses of white, set

with careful choice of situation exactly where they will spoil the landscape to such a conspicuous degree, as to compel the gentlemen travelling on the outside of the mail to enquire of the guard, with great eagerness, "whose place that is;" and to enable the guard to reply with great distinctness, that it belongs to Squire ——, to the infinite gratification of Squire ——, and the still more infinite edification of the gentlemen on the outside of the mail. Others will remember masses of very red brick, quoined with stone; with columnar porticoes, about one third of the height of the building, and two niches, with remarkable looking heads and bag-wigs in them, on each side; and two teapots, with a pocket-handkerchief hanging over each (described to the astonished spectator as "Grecian urns") located upon the roof, just under the chimneys. Others will go back to the range of Elizabethan gables; but none will have any idea of a fixed character, stamped on a class of national edifices. This is very melancholy, and very discouraging; the more so, as it is not without cause.

149. In the first place, Britain unites in itself so many geological formations, each

giving a peculiar character to the country which it composes, that there is hardly a district five miles broad, which preserves the same features of landscape through its whole width.\* If, for example, six foreigners were to land severally at Glasgow, at Aberystwith, at Falmouth, at Brighton, at Yarmouth, and at Newcastle, and to confine their investigations to the country within twenty miles of them, what different impressions would they receive of British landscape! If, therefore, there be as many forms of edifice as there are peculiarities of situation, we can have no national style; and if we abandon the idea of a correspondence with situation, we lose the only criterion capable of forming a national style.†

\* Length is another thing: we might divide England into strips of country, running south-west and north-east, which would be composed of the same rock, and therefore would present the same character throughout the whole of their length. Almost all our great roads cut these transversely, and therefore seldom remain for ten miles together on the same beds.

† It is thus that we find the most perfect schools of architecture have arisen in districts whose character is unchanging. Looking to Egypt first, we find a climate inducing a perpetual state of heavy feverish excitement, fostered by great magnificence of natural phenomena, and increased by the general custom of exposing the head continually to the sun (Herodotus, bk. III. chap. 12); so that, as in a dreaming fever we imagine

150. Another cause to be noticed is the peculiar independence of the Englishman's disposition; a feeling which prompts him to suit his own humour, rather than fall in with the prevailing cast of social sentiment, or of natural beauty and expression; and which, therefore,—there being much obstinate originality in his mind,—produces strange varieties of dwelling, frequently rendered still more preposterous by his love of display; a love universally felt in England, and often absurdly indulged. Wealth is worshipped in France as the means of purchasing pleasure; in Italy, as an instrument of power; in England, as the distorted creatures and countenances, moving and living in the quiet objects of the chamber, the Egyptian endowed all existence with distorted animation; turned dogs into deities, and leeks into lightning-darters; then gradually invested the blank granite with sculptured mystery, designed in superstition, and adored in disease; and then such masses of architecture arose as, in delirium, we feel crushing down upon us with eternal weight, and see extending far into the blackness above; huge and shapeless columns of colossal life; immense and immeasurable avenues of mountain stone. This was a perfect—that is, a marked, enduring, and decided school of architecture, induced by an unchanging and peculiar character of climate. Then in the purer air, and among the more refined energies of Greece, architecture rose into a more studied beauty, equally perfect in its school, because fostered in a district not 50 miles square, and in its dependent isles and colonies, all of which were under the same air, and

means of “showing off.” It would be a very great sacrifice indeed, in an Englishman of the average stamp, to put his villa out of the way, where nobody would ever see it, or think of *him*; it is his ambition to hear every one exclaiming, “What a pretty place! whose can it be?” And he cares very little about the peace which he has disturbed, or the repose which he has interrupted; though, even while he thus pushes himself into the way, he keeps an air of sulky retirement, of hedgehog independence, about his house, which takes away any idea of sociability or good-humour, which might otherwise have been suggested by his choice of situation.

partook of the same features of landscape. In Rome, it became less perfect, because more imitative than indigenous, and corrupted by the travelling, and conquering, and stealing ambition of the Roman; yet still a school of architecture, because the whole of Italy presented the same peculiarities of scene. So with the Spanish and Moresco schools, and many others; passing over the Gothic, which, though we hope hereafter to show it to be no exception to the rule, involves too many complicated questions to be now brought forward as a proof of it.

[The comparison of Egyptian architecture with delirious visions seems to be an allusion to De Quincey’s passage in “The Pains of Opium”—the last paper in “The Confessions of an Opium-Eater”—where, after describing Piranesi’s *Dreams*, he tells how he fancied he was “buried for a thousand years, in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids,” etc.]

151. But, in spite of all these unfortunate circumstances, there are some distinctive features in our English country houses, which are well worth a little attention. First, in the approach, we have one component part of effect, which may be called peculiarly our own, and which requires much study before it can be managed well,—the avenue. It is true that we meet with noble lines of timber trees cresting some of the larger bastions of Continental fortified cities; we see interminable regiments of mistletoed apple trees flanking the carriage road; and occasionally we approach a turreted château\* by a broad way, “edged with poplar pale.” But, allowing all this, the legitimate glory of the perfect avenue is ours still, as will appear by a little consideration of the elements which constitute its beauty.

152. The original idea was given by the opening of the tangled glades in our most ancient forests. It is rather a curious circumstance that, in those woods whose decay has

\* Or a city. Anyone who remembers entering Carlsruhe from the north, by the two miles of poplar avenue, remembers entering the most soulless of all cities, by the most lifeless of all entrances.

been most instrumental in forming the bog districts of Ireland, the trees have, in general, been planted in symmetrical rows, at distances of about twenty feet apart. If the arrangement of our later woods be not quite so formal, they at least present frequent openings, carpeted with green sward, and edged with various foliage, which the architect (for so may the designer of the avenue be entitled) should do little more than reduce to symmetry and place in position, preserving, as much as possible, the manner and the proportions of nature. The avenue, therefore, must not be too long. It is quite a mistake to suppose that there is sublimity in a monotonous length of line, unless indeed it be carried to an extent generally impossible, as in the case of the long walk at Windsor. From three to four hundred yards is a length which will display the elevation well, and will not become tiresome from continued monotony. The kind of tree must, of course, be regulated by circumstances; but the foliage must be unequally disposed, so as to let in passages of light across the path, and cause the motion of any object across it to change like an undulating melody, from darkness to

light. It should meet at the top, so as to cause twilight, but not obscurity; and the idea of a vaulted roof, without rigidity. The ground should be green, so that the sunlight may tell with force wherever it strikes. Now, this kind of rich and shadowy vista is found in its perfection only in England: it is an attribute of green country; it is associated with all our memories of forest freedom, of our wood-rangers, and yeomen with the "doublets of the Lincoln green;" with our pride of ancient archers, whose art was fostered in such long and breezeless glades; with our thoughts of the merry chases of our kingly companies, when the dewy antlers sparkled down the intertwined paths of the windless woods, at the morning echo of the hunter's horn; with all, in fact, that once contributed to give our land its ancient name of "merry" England; a name which, in this age of steam and iron, it will have some difficulty in keeping.

153. This, then, is the first feature we would direct attention to, as characteristic, in the English villa: and be it remembered, that we are not speaking of the immense lines of foliage which guide the eye to some of our English



palaces, for those are rather the adjuncts of the park than the approach to the building; but of the more laconic avenue, with the two crested columns and the iron gate at its entrance, leading the eye, in the space of a hundred yards or so, to the gables of its grey mansion. A good instance of this approach may be found at Petersham, by following the right side of the Thames for about half a mile from Richmond Hill; though the house, which, in this case, is approached by a noble avenue, is much to be reprehended, as a bad mixture of imitation of the Italian with corrupt Elizabethan; though it is somewhat instructive, as showing the ridiculous effect of statues out of doors in a climate like ours.

154. And now that we have pointed out the kind of approach most peculiarly English, that approach will guide us to the only style of villa architecture which can be called English,—the Elizabethan, and its varieties,—a style fantastic in its details, and capable of being subjected to no rule, but, as we think, well adapted for the scenery in which it arose. We allude not only to the pure Elizabethan, but even to the strange mixtures of classical

ornaments with Gothic forms, which we find prevailing in the sixteenth century. In the most simple form, we have a building extending round three sides of a court, and, in the larger halls, round several interior courts, terminating in sharply gabled fronts, with broad oriels divided into very narrow lights by channelled mullions, without decoration of any kind; the roof relieved by projecting dormer windows, whose lights are generally divided into three, terminating in very flat arches without cusps, the intermediate edge of the roof being battlemented. Then we find wreaths of ornament introduced at the base of the oriels;\* ranges of short columns, the base of one upon the capital of another, running up beside them; the bases being very tall, sometimes decorated with knots of flower-work; the columns usually fluted,—wreathed, in richer examples, with ornament. The entrance is frequently formed by double ranges of those short columns, with intermediate arches, with shell canopies, and rich crests above.† This portico is carried

\* As in a beautiful example in Brasenose College, Oxford.

† The portico of the [old] Schools and the inner courts of Merton and St. John's Colleges, Oxford; an old house

up to some height above the roof, which is charged with an infinite variety of decorated chimneys.

155. Now, all this is utterly barbarous as architecture ; but, with the exception of the chimneys, it is not false in taste ; for it was originally intended for retired and quiet habitations in our forest country, not for conspicuous palaces in the streets of the city ; and we have shown, in speaking of green country, that the eye is gratified\* with fantastic details ; that it is prepared, by the mingled lights of the natural scenery, for rich and entangled ornament, and would not only endure, but demand, irregularity of system in the architecture of man, to correspond with the infinite variety of form in the wood architecture of nature. Few surprises can be imagined more delightful than the breaking out of one of these rich gables, with its decorated entrance, among the dark trunks and twinkling leaves of forest scenery. Such an effect is rudely given in fig. 12.

at Charlton, Kent ; and Burleigh House, will probably occur to the mind of the architect, as good examples of the varieties of this mixed style.

[\* *i.e.* when the spectator is surrounded by woodland scenery. *Vide ante*, § 88.]

We would direct the attention chiefly to the following points in the building :—

156. First, it is a humourist, an odd, twisted, independent being, with a great deal of mixed, obstinate, and occasionally absurd originality. It has one or two graceful lines about it, and several harsh and cutting ones ; it is a whole, which would allow of no unison with any other architecture ; it is gathered in itself, and would look very ugly indeed, if pieces in a purer style of building were added. All this corresponds with points of English character, with its humours, its independency, and its horror of being put out of its own way.

157. Again, it is a thoroughly domestic building, homely and cottage-like in its prevailing forms, awakening no elevated ideas, assuming no nobility of form. It has none of the pride, or the grace of beauty, none of the dignity of delight which we found in the villa of Italy ; but it is a habitation of every-day life, a protection from momentary inconvenience, covered with stiff efforts at decoration, and exactly typical of the mind of its inhabitant : not noble in its taste, not haughty in its recreation, not pure in its perception of beauty ;





Fig. 12 Old English Mansion

1837

but domestic in its pleasures, fond of matter-of-fact rather than of imagination, yet sparkling occasionally with odd wit and grotesque association. The Italian obtains his beauty, as his recreation, with quietness, with few and noble lines, with great seriousness and depth of thought, with very rare interruptions to the simple train of feeling. But the Englishman's villa is full of effort: it is a business with him to be playful, an infinite labour to be ornamental: he forces his amusement with fits of contrasted thought, with mingling of minor touches of humour, with a good deal of sulki-ness, but with no melancholy; and therefore, owing to this last adjunct,\* the building, in its original state, cannot be called beautiful, and we ought not to consider the effect of its present antiquity, evidence of which is, as was before proved, generally objectionable in a building devoted to pleasure,† and is only agreeable here, because united with the memory of a departed pride.

158. Again, it is a lifelike building, sparkling

[\* Namely, the fact that there is no melancholy in the English play-impulse; *v. ante*, § 23.]

[† See § 118 seq.]

in its casements, brisk in its air, letting much light in at the walls and roof, low and comfortable-looking in its door. The Italian's dwelling is much walled in, letting out no secrets from the inside, dreary and drowsy in its effect. Just such is the difference between the minds of the inhabitants; the one passing away in deep and dark reverie, the other quick and business-like, enjoying its everyday occupations, and active in its ordinary engagements.

159. Again, it is a regularly planned, mechanical, well-disciplined building; each of its parts answering to its opposite, each of its ornaments matched with similarity. The Italian (where it has no high pretence to architectural beauty) is a rambling and irregular edifice, varied with uncorresponding masses: and the mind of the Italian we find similarly irregular, a thing of various and ungovernable impulse, without fixed principle of action; the Englishman's, regular and uniform in its emotions, steady in its habits, and firm even in its most trivial determinations.

160. Lastly, the size of the whole is diminutive, compared with the villas of the south, in



which the effect was always large and general. Here the eye is drawn into the investigation of particular points, and miniature details; just as, in comparing the English and Continental cottages, we found the one characterised by a minute finish, and the other by a massive effect, exactly correspondent with the scale of the features and scenery of their respective localities.

161. It appears, then, from a consideration of these several points, that, in our antiquated style of villa architecture, some national feeling may be discovered; but in any buildings now raised there is no character whatever: all is ridiculous imitation, and despicable affectation; and it is much to be lamented, that now, when a great deal of public attention has been directed to architecture on the part of the public, more efforts are not made to turn that attention from mimicking Swiss *châlets*, to erecting English houses. We need not devote more time to the investigation of *purely* domestic English architecture, though we hope to derive much instruction and pleasure from the contemplation of buildings partly adapted for defence, and partly for residence. The introduction

of the means of defence is, however, a distinction which we do not wish at present to pass over; and therefore, in our next paper, we hope to conclude the subject of the villa, by a few remarks on the style now best adapted for English scenery.

## V.

### THE ENGLISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

162. IT has lately become a custom, among the more enlightened and refined of metropolitan shopkeepers, to advocate the cause of propriety in architectural decoration, by ensconcing their shelves, counters, and clerks in classical edifices, agreeably ornamented with ingenious devices, typical of the class of articles to which the tradesman particularly desires to direct the public attention. We find our grocers enshrined in temples whose columns are of canisters, and whose pinnacles are of sugar-loaves. Our shoemakers shape their soles under Gothic portals, with pendants of shoes, and canopies of Wellingtons; and our cheesemongers will, we doubt not, soon follow the excellent example, by raising shops the varied diameters of whose jointed columns, in

their address to the eye, shall awaken memories of Staffa, Pæstum, and Palmyra; and in their address to the tongue, shall arouse exquisite associations of remembered flavour, Dutch, Stilton, and Strachino.

163. Now, this fit of taste on the part of our tradesmen is only a coarse form of a disposition inherent in the human mind. Those objects to which the eye has been most frequently accustomed, and among which the intellect has formed its habits of action, and the soul its modes of emotion, become agreeable to the thoughts, from their correspondence with their prevailing cast, especially when the business of life has had any relation to those objects; for it is in the habitual and necessary occupation that the most painless hours of existence are passed: whatever be the nature of that occupation, the memories belonging to it will always be agreeable, and, therefore, the objects awakening such memories will invariably be found beautiful, whatever their character or form.

164. It is thus that taste is the child and the slave of memory; and beauty is tested, not by any fixed standard, but by the chances of

association ; so that in every domestic building evidence will be found of the kind of life through which its owner has passed, in the operation of the habits of mind which that life has induced. From the superannuated coxswain, who plants his old ship's figure-head in his six square feet of front garden at Bermondsey, to the retired noble, the proud portal of whose mansion is surmounted by the broad shield and the crested gryphon, we are all guided, in our purest conceptions, our most ideal pursuit, of the beautiful, by remembrances of active occupation ; and by principles derived from industry regulate the fancies of our repose.

165. It would be excessively interesting to follow out the investigation of this subject more fully, and to show how the most refined pleasures, the most delicate perceptions, of the creature who has been appointed to eat bread by the sweat of his brow, are dependent upon, and intimately connected with, his hours of labour. This question, however, has no relation to our immediate object, and we only allude to it, that we may be able to distinguish between the two component parts of individual

character; the one being the consequence of continuous habits of life acting upon natural temperament and disposition, the other being the *humour* of character, consequent upon circumstances altogether accidental, taking stern effect upon feelings previously determined by the first part of the character; laying on, as it were, the finishing touches, and occasioning the innumerable prejudices, fancies, and eccentricities, which, modified in every individual to an infinite extent, form the visible veil of the human heart.

166. Now, we have defined the province of the architect to be, that of selecting such forms and colours as shall delight the mind, by preparing it for the operations to which it is to be subjected in the building. Now, no forms, in domestic architecture, can thus prepare it more distinctly than those which correspond closely with the first, that is, the fixed and fundamental, part of character, which is always so uniform in its action, as to induce great simplicity in whatever it designs. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more injurious than the slightest influence of the *humours* upon the edifice; for the influence of what is fitful in its energy,

and petty in its imagination, would destroy all the harmony of parts, all the majesty of the whole ; would substitute singularity for beauty, amusement for delight, and surprise for veneration. We could name several instances of buildings erected by men of the highest talent, and the most perfect general taste, who yet, not having paid much attention to the first principles of architecture, permitted the humour of their disposition to prevail over the majesty of their intellect, and, instead of building from a fixed design, gratified freak after freak, and fancy after fancy, as they were caught by the dream or the desire ; mixed mimicries of incongruous reality with incorporations of undisciplined ideal ; awakened every variety of contending feeling and unconnected memory ; consummated confusion of form by trickery of detail ; and have left barbarism, where half the world will look for loveliness.

167. This is a species of error which it is very difficult for persons paying superficial and temporary attention to architecture to avoid : however just their taste may be in criticism, it will fail in creation. It is only in moments of ease and amusement that they will think

of their villa: they make it a mere plaything, and regard it with a kind of petty exultation, which, from its very nature, will give liberty to the light fancy, rather than the deep feeling, of the mind. It is not thought necessary to bestow labour of thought, and periods of deliberation, on one of the toys of life; still less to undergo the vexation of thwarting wishes, and leaving favourite imaginations, relating to minor points, unfulfilled, for the sake of general effect.

168. This feeling, then, is the first to which we would direct attention, as the villa architect's chief enemy: he will find it perpetually and provokingly in his way. He is requested, perhaps, by a man of great wealth, nay, of established taste in some points, to make a design for a villa in a lovely situation. The future proprietor carries him up-stairs to his study, to give him what he calls his "ideas and materials," and, in all probability, begins somewhat thus:—"This, sir, is a slight note: I made it on the spot: approach to Villa Reale, near Pozzuoli. Dancing nymphs, you perceive; cypresses, shell fountain. I think I should like something like this for the approach: classical, you perceive, sir; elegant,



graceful. Then, sir, this is a sketch, made by an American friend of mine : Whee-whaw-Kantamaraw's wigwam, King of the—Cannibal Islands, I think he said, sir. Log, you observe ; scalps, and boa constrictor skins : curious. Something like this, sir, would look neat, I think, for the front door ; don't you ? Then, the lower windows, I've not quite decided upon ; but what would you say to Egyptian, sir ? I think I should like my windows Egyptian, with hieroglyphics, sir ; storks and coffins, and appropriate mouldings above : I brought some from Fountains Abbey the other day. Look here, sir ; angels' heads putting their tongues out, rolled up in cabbage leaves, with a dragon on each side riding on a broomstick, and the devil looking on from the mouth of an alligator, sir.\* Odd, I think ; interesting. Then the corners may be turned by octagonal towers, like the centre one in Kenilworth Castle ; with Gothic doors, portcullis, and all, quite perfect ; with cross slits for arrows, battlements for musketry, machicolations for boiling lead, and a room at the top for drying plums ; and the conservatory at the bottom,

\* Actually carved on one of the groins of Roslin Chapel.

sir, with Virginian creepers up the towers; door supported by sphinxes, holding scrapers in their fore paws, and having their tails prolonged into warm-water pipes, to keep the plants safe in winter, etc." The architect is, without doubt, a little astonished by these ideas and combinations; yet he sits calmly down to draw his elevations; as if he were a stone-mason, or his employer an architect; and the fabric rises to electrify its beholders, and confer immortality on its perpetrator.

169. This is no exaggeration: we have not only listened to speculations on the probable degree of the future majesty, but contemplated the actual illustrious existence, of several such buildings, with sufficient beauty in the management of some of their features to show that an architect had superintended them, and sufficient taste in their interior economy to prove that a refined intellect had projected them; and had projected a Vandalism, only because fancy had been followed instead of judgment; with as much *nonchalance* as is evinced by a perfect poet, who is extemporising doggerel for a baby; full of brilliant points, which he cannot help, and jumbled into confusion, for which he does not care.

170. Such are the first difficulties to be encountered in villa designs. They must always continue to occur in some degree, though they might be met with ease by a determination on the part of professional men to give no assistance whatever, beyond the mere superintendence of construction, unless they be permitted to take the whole exterior design into their own hands, merely receiving broad instructions respecting the style (and not attending to them unless they like). They should not make out the smallest detail, unless they were answerable for the whole. In this case, gentlemen architects would be thrown so utterly on their own resources, that, unless those resources were adequate, they would be obliged to surrender the task into more practised hands; and, if they were adequate, if the amateur had paid so much attention to the art as to be capable of giving the design perfectly, it is probable he would not erect anything strikingly abominable.

171. Such a system (supposing that it could be carried fully into effect, and that there were no such animals as sentimental stone-masons to give technical assistance) might, at first,

seem rather an encroachment on the liberty of the subject, inasmuch as it would prevent people from indulging their edificatorial fancies, unless they knew something about the matter, or, as the sufferers would probably complain, from doing what they liked with their own. But the mistake would evidently lie in their supposing, as people too frequently do, that the outside of their house *is* their own, and that they have a perfect right therein to make fools of themselves in any manner, and to any extent, they may think proper. This is quite true in the case of interiors; every one has an indisputable right to hold himself up as a laughing-stock to the whole circle of his friends and acquaintances, and to consult his own private asinine comfort by every piece of absurdity which can in any degree contribute to the same; but no one has any right to exhibit his imbecilities at other people's expense, or to claim the public pity by inflicting public pain. In England, especially, where, as we saw before, the rage for attracting observation is universal, the outside of the villa is rendered, by the proprietor's own disposition, the property of those who daily pass by, and

whom it hourly affects with pleasure or pain. For the pain which the eye feels from the violation of a law to which it has been accustomed, or the mind from the occurrence of anything jarring to its finest feelings, is as distinct as that occasioned by the interruption of the physical economy, differing only inasmuch as it is not permanent; and, therefore, an individual has as little right to fulfil his own conceptions by disgusting thousands, as, were his body as impenetrable to steel or poison, as his brain to the effect of the beautiful or true, he would have to decorate his carriage roads with caltrops, or to line his plantations with upas trees.

172. The violation of general feelings would thus be unjust, even were their consultation productive of continued vexation to the individual: but it is not. To no one is the architecture of the exterior of a dwelling house of so little consequence as to its inhabitant. Its material may affect his comfort, and its condition may touch his pride; but, for its architecture, his eye gets accustomed to it in a week, and, after that, Hellenic, Barbaric, or Yankee, are all the same to the domestic feelings, are

all lost in the one name of Home. Even the conceit of living in a *châlet*, or a wigwam, or a pagoda, cannot retain its influence for six months over the weak minds which alone can feel it; and the monotony of existence becomes to them exactly what it would have been had they never inflicted a pang upon the unfortunate spectators, whose unaccustomed eyes shrink daily from the impression to which they have not been rendered callous by custom, or lenient by false taste.

173. If these considerations are just when they allude only to buildings in the abstract, how much more when referring to them as materials of composition, materials of infinite power, to adorn or destroy the loveliness of the earth. The nobler scenery of that earth is the inheritance of all her inhabitants: it is not merely for the few to whom it temporarily belongs, to feed from like swine, or to stable upon like horses, but it has been appointed to be the school of the minds which are kingly among their fellows, to excite the highest energies of humanity, to furnish strength to the lordliest intellect, and food for the holiest emotions of the human soul. The presence of

life is, indeed, necessary to its beauty, but of life congenial with its character; and that life is not congenial which thrusts presumptuously forward, amidst the calmness of the universe, the confusion of its own petty interests and grovelling imaginations, and stands up with the insolence of a moment, amid the majesty of all time, to build baby fortifications upon the bones of the world, or to sweep the copse from the corrie, and the shadow from the shore, that fools may risk, and gamblers gather, the spoil of a thousand summers.

174. It should therefore be remembered by every proprietor of land in hill country, that his possessions are the means of a peculiar education, otherwise unattainable, to the artists, and in some degree to the literary men, of his country; that, even in this limited point of view, they are a national possession, but much more so when it is remembered how many thousands are perpetually receiving from them, not merely a transitory pleasure, but such thrilling perpetuity of pure emotion, such lofty subject for scientific speculation, and such deep lessons of natural religion, as only the work of a Deity can impress, and only the spirit of

an immortal can feel: they should remember that the slightest deformity, the most contemptible excrescence, can injure the effect of the noblest natural scenery, as a note of discord can annihilate the expression of the purest harmony; that thus it is in the power of worms to conceal, to destroy, or to violate, what angels could not restore, create or consecrate; and that the right, which every man unquestionably possesses, to be an ass, is extended only, in public, to those who are innocent in idiotism, not to the more malicious clowns, who thrust their degraded motley conspicuously forth amidst the fair colours of earth, and mix their incoherent cries with the melodies of eternity, break with their inane laugh upon the silence which Creation keeps where Omnipotence passes most visibly, and scrabble over with the characters of idiocy the pages that have been written by the finger of God.

175. These feelings we would endeavour to impress upon all persons likely to have anything to do with embellishing, as it is called, fine natural scenery; as they might, in some degree, convince both the architect and his



employer of the danger of giving free play to the imagination in cases involving intricate questions of feeling and composition, and might persuade the designer of the necessity of looking, not to his own acre of land, or to his own peculiar tastes, but to the whole mass of forms and combination of impressions with which he is surrounded.

176. Let us suppose, however, that the design is yielded entirely to the architect's discretion. Being a piece of domestic architecture, the chief object in its exterior design will be to arouse domestic feelings, which, as we saw before, it will do most distinctly by corresponding with the first part of character. Yet it is still more necessary that it should correspond with its situation; and hence arises another difficulty, the reconciliation of correspondence with contraries; for such, it is deeply to be regretted, are too often the individual's mind, and the dwelling-place it chooses. The polished courtier brings his refinement and duplicity with him to ape the Arcadian rustic in Devonshire; the romantic rhymer takes a plastered habitation, with one back window looking into the Green Park; the soft votary

of luxury endeavours to rise at seven, in some Ultima Thule of frosts and storms; and the rich stock-jobber calculates his percentages among the soft dingles and woody shores of Westmoreland. When the architect finds this to be the case, he must, of course, content himself with suiting his design to such a mind as ought to be where the intruder's is; for the feelings which are so much at variance with themselves in the choice of situation, will not be found too critical of their domicile, however little suited to their temper.

177. If possible, however, he should aim at something more; he should draw his employer into general conversation; observe the bent of his disposition, and the habits of his mind; notice every manifestation of fixed opinions, and then transfer to his architecture as much of the feeling he has observed as is distinct in its operation. This he should do, not because the general spectator will be aware of the aptness of the building, which, knowing nothing of its inmate, he cannot be; nor to please the individual himself, which it is a chance if any simple design ever will, and who never will find out how well his character has been fitted;

but because a portrait is always more spirited than a composed countenance; and because this study of human passions will bring a degree of energy, unity, and originality into every one of his designs (all of which will necessarily be different), so simple, so domestic, and so lifelike, as to strike every spectator with an interest and a sympathy, for which he will be utterly unable to account, and to impress on him a perception of something more ethereal than stone or carving, somewhat similar to that which some will remember having felt disagreeably in their childhood, on looking at any old house authentically haunted. The architect will forget in his study of life the formalities of science, and, while his practised eye will prevent him from erring in technicalities, he will advance, with the ruling feeling, which, in masses of mind, is nationality, to the conception of something truly original, yet perfectly pure.

178. He will also find his advantage in having obtained a guide in the invention of decorations of which, as we shall show, we would have many more in English villas than economy at present allows. Candidus \*

[\* A contributor to the "Architectural Magazine."]

complains, in his Note Book, that Elizabethan architecture is frequently adopted, because it is easy, with a pair of scissors, to derive a zigzag ornament from a doubled piece of paper. But we would fain hope that none of our professional architects have so far lost sight of the meaning of their art, as to believe that roughening stone mathematically is bestowing decoration, though we are too sternly convinced that they believe mankind to be more shortsighted by at least thirty yards than they are ; for they think of nothing but general effect in their ornaments, and lay on their flower-work so carelessly, that a good substantial captain's biscuit, with the small holes left by the penetration of the baker's four fingers, encircling the large one which testifies of the forcible passage of his thumb, would form quite as elegant a rosette as hundreds now perpetuated in stone.

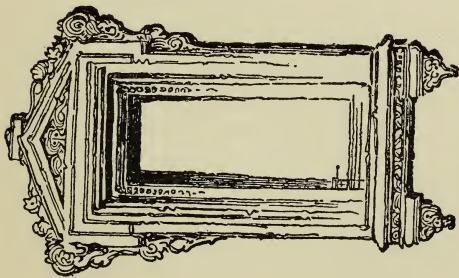
179. Now, there is nothing which requires study so close, or experiment so frequent, as the proper designing of ornament. For its use and position some definite rules may be given ; but, when the space and position have been determined, the lines of curvature, the breadth, depth, and sharpness of the shadows to be

obtained, the junction of the parts of a group, and the general expression, will present questions for the solution of which the study of years will sometimes scarcely be sufficient; \* for they depend upon the feeling of the eye and hand, and there is nothing like perfection in decoration, nothing which, in all probability, might not, by farther consideration, be improved. Now, in cases in which the outline and larger masses are determined by situation, the architect will frequently find it necessary to fall back upon his decorations, as the only means of obtaining character; and that which before was an unmeaning lump of jagged free-stone, will become a part of expression, an accessory of beautiful design, varied in its form, and delicate in its effect. Then, instead of shrinking from his bits of ornament, as from things which will give him trouble to invent, and will answer no other purpose than that of occupying what would otherwise have looked

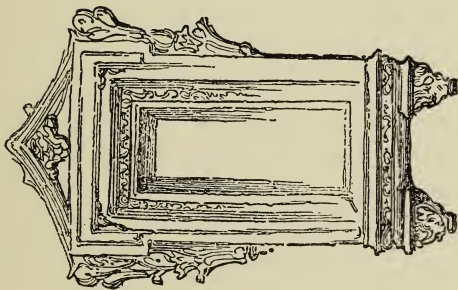
\* For example, we would allow one of the modern builders of Gothic chapels a month of invention, and a botanic garden to work from, with perfect certainty that he would not, at the expiration of the time, be able to present us with one design of leafage equal in beauty to hundreds we could point out in the capitals and niches of Melrose and Roslin.

blank, the designer will view them as an efficient *corps de reserve*, to be brought up when the eye comes to close quarters with the edifice, to maintain and deepen the impression it has previously received. Much more time will be spent in the conception, much more labour in the execution, of such meaning ornaments, but both will be well spent and well rewarded.

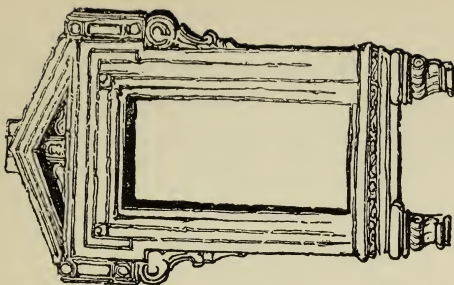
180. Perhaps our meaning may be made more clear by Fig. 13 A, which is that of a window found in a domestic building of mixed and corrupt architecture, at Munich (which we give now, because we shall have occasion to allude to it hereafter). Its absurd breadth of moulding, so disproportionate to its cornice, renders it excessively ugly, but capable of great variety of effect. It forms one of a range of four, turning an angle, whose mouldings join each other, their double breadth being the whole separation of the apertures, which are something more than double squares. Now by alteration of the decoration, and depth of shadow, we have B and C. These three windows differ entirely in their feeling and manner, and are broad examples of such distinctions



A.



B.



C.

Fig. 13. Windows.





of style as might be adopted severally in the habitations of the man of imagination, the man of intellect and the man of feeling.\* If our alterations have been properly made, there will be no difficulty in distinguishing between their expressions, which we shall therefore leave to conjecture. The character of A depends upon the softness with which the light is caught upon its ornaments, which should not have a single hard line in them; and on the gradual, unequal, but intense, depth of its shadows. B should have all its forms undefined, and passing into one another, the touches of the chisel light, a grotesque face or feature occurring in parts, the shadows pale, but broad †; and the boldest part of the carving

[\* Though not in this order. C is the intellectual window; B, the imaginative one.]

† It is too much the custom to consider a design as composed of a certain number of hard lines, instead of a certain number of shadows of various depth and dimension. Though these shadows change their position in the course of the day, they are relatively always the same. They have most variety under a strong light without sun, most expression with the sun. A little observation of the infinite variety of shade which the sun is capable of casting, as it touches projections of different curve and character, will enable the designer to be certain of his effects. We shall have occasion to allude to this subject again. [See *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, III. 13, 23.]

kept in shadow rather than light. The third should be hard in its lines, strong in its shades, and quiet in its ornament.

181. These hints will be sufficient to explain our meaning, and we have not space to do more, as the object of these papers is rather to observe than to advise. Besides, in questions of expression so intricate, it is almost impossible to advance fixed principles; every mind will have perceptions of its own, which will guide its speculations, every hand, and eye, and peculiar feeling, varying even from year to year. We have only started the subject of correspondence with individual character, because we think that imaginative minds might take up the idea with some success, as furnishing them with a guide in the variation of their designs, more certain than mere experiment on unmeaning forms, or than ringing indiscriminate changes on component parts of established beauty. To the reverie, rather than the investigation, to the dream, rather than the deliberation, of the architect, we recommend it, as a branch of art in which instinct will do more than precept, and inspiration than technicality. The correspondence of

our villa architecture with our natural scenery may be determined with far greater accuracy, and will require careful investigation.

We had hoped to have concluded the Villa in this paper ; but the importance of domestic architecture at the present day, when people want houses more than fortresses, safes more than keeps, and sculleries more than dungeons, is sufficient apology for delay.

OXFORD, *August* 1838.

## VI.

### THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

*The Cultivated, or Blue Country;  
and the Wooded, or Green Country.*

182. IN the papers hitherto devoted to the investigation of villa architecture, we have contemplated the beauties of what may be considered as its model, in its original and natural territory ; and we have noticed the difficulties to be encountered in the just erection of villas in England. It remains only to lay down the general principles of composition, which in such difficulties may, in some degree, serve as a guide. Into more than general principles it is not consistent with our plan to enter. One obstacle, which was more particularly noticed, was, as it may be remembered, the variety of the geological formations of the country. This will compel us to use the

divisions of landscape formerly adopted in speaking of the cottage, and to investigate severally the kind of domestic architecture required by each.

183. First. Blue or cultivated country, which is to be considered as including those suburban districts, in the neighbourhood of populous cities, which, though more frequently black than blue, possess the activity, industry, and life, which we before noticed as one of the characteristics of blue country. We shall not, however, allude to suburban villas at present; first, because they are in country possessing nothing which can be spoiled by anything; and, secondly, because their close association renders them subject to laws which, being altogether different from those by which we are to judge of the beauty of solitary villas, we shall have to develop in the consideration of street effects.

184. Passing over the suburb, then, we have to distinguish between the *simple* blue country, which is composed only of rich cultivated champaign, relieved in parts by low undulations, monotonous and uninteresting as a whole, though cheerful in its character, and beautiful

in details of lanes and meadow paths; and the *picturesque* blue country, lying at the foot of high hill ranges, intersected by their outworks, broken here and there into bits of crag and dingle scenery; perpetually presenting prospects of exquisite distant beauty, and possessing in its valley and river scenery, fine detached specimens of the natural "green country." This distinction we did not make in speaking of the cottage; the effect of which, owing to its size, can extend only over a limited space; and this space, if in picturesque blue country, must be either part of its monotonous cultivation, when it is to be considered as belonging to the simple blue country, or part of its dingle scenery, when it becomes green country; and it would not be just, to suit a cottage, actually placed in one colour, to the general effect of another colour, with which it could have nothing to do. But the effect of the villa extends very often over a considerable space, and becomes part of the large features of the district; so that the whole character and expression of the visible landscape must be considered, and thus the distinction between the two kinds of blue country

becomes absolutely necessary. Of the first, or simple, we have already adduced, as an example, the greater part of the South of England. Of the second, or picturesque, the cultivated parts of the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, generally Shropshire, and the north of Lancashire, and Cumberland, beyond Caldbeck Fells, are good examples; perhaps better than all, the country for twelve miles north, and thirty south, east, and west, of Stirling.

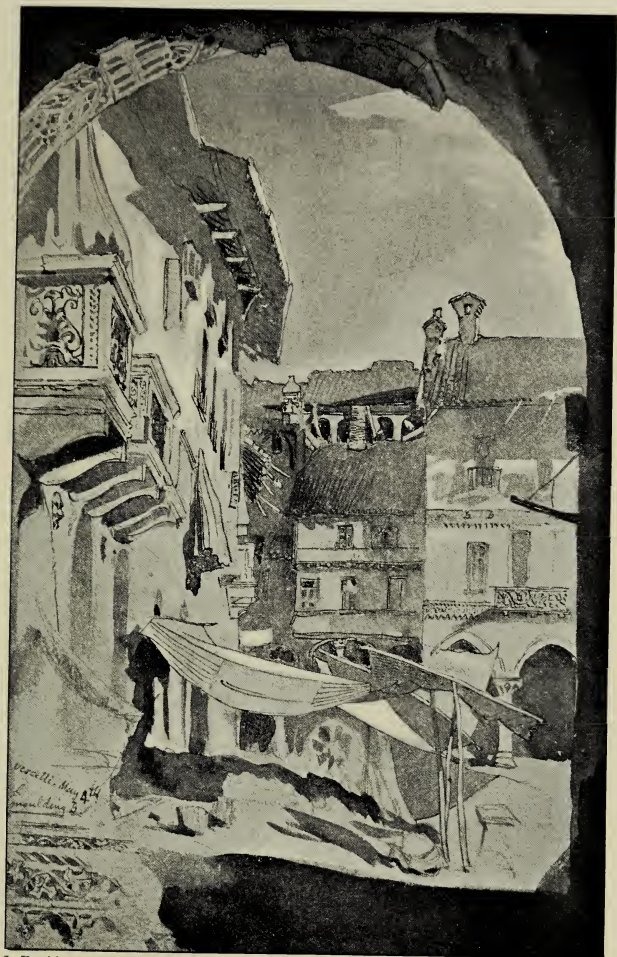
*A. The Simple Blue Country.*

185. Now, the matter-of-fact business-like activity of simple blue country has been already alluded to. This attribute renders in it a plain palpable brick dwelling-house allowable; though a thing which, in every country but the simple blue, compels every spectator of any feeling to send up aspirations, that builders who, like those of Babel, have brick for stone, may be put, like those of Babel, to confusion. Here, however, it is not only allowable, but even agreeable, for the following reasons:—

186. Its cleanness and freshness of colour, admitting of little dampness or staining, firm

in its consistence, not mouldering like stone, and therefore inducing no conviction of antiquity or decay, presents rather the appearance of such comfort as is contrived for the enjoyment of temporary wealth, than of such solidity as is raised for the inheritance of unfluctuating power. It is thus admirably suited for that country where all is change, and all activity; where the working and money-making members of the community are perpetually succeeding and overpowering each other; enjoying, each in his turn, the reward of his industry; yielding up the field, the pasture, and the mine, to his successor, and leaving no more memory behind him, no farther evidence of his individual existence, than is left by a working bee, in the honey for which we thank his class, forgetting the individual. The simple blue country may, in fact, be considered the dining-table of the nation; from which it provides for its immediate necessities, at which it feels only its present existence, and in which it requires, not a piece of furniture adapted only to remind it of past refection, but a polished, clean, and convenient minister to its immediate wishes. No habitation, therefore,





J. Ruskin

Vercelli



in this country, should look old: it should give an impression of present prosperity, of swift motion and high energy of life; too rapid in its successive operation to attain greatness, or allow of decay, in its works. This is the first cause which, in this country, renders brick allowable.

187. Again, wherever the soil breaks out in simple blue country, whether in the river shore, or the broken road-side bank, or the ploughed field, in nine cases out of ten it is excessively warm in its colour, being either gravel or clay, the black vegetable soil never remaining free of vegetation. The warm tone of these beds of soil is an admirable relief to the blue of the distances, which we have taken as the distinctive feature of the country, tending to produce the perfect light without which no landscape can be complete. Therefore the red of the brick is prevented from glaring upon the eye, by its falling in with similar colours in the ground, and contrasting finely with the general tone of the distance. This is another instance of the material which nature most readily furnishes being the right one. In almost all blue country, we have only to turn

out a few spadefuls of loose soil, and we come to the bed of clay, which is the best material for the building; whereas we should have to travel hundreds of miles, or to dig thousands of feet, to get the stone which nature does not want, and therefore has not given.

188. Another excellence in brick is its perfect air of English respectability. It is utterly impossible for an edifice altogether of brick to look affected or absurd: it may look rude, it may look vulgar, it may look disgusting, in a wrong place; but it cannot look foolish, for it is incapable of pretension. We may suppose its master a brute, or an ignoramus, but we can never suppose him a coxcomb: a bear he may be, a fop he cannot be; and, if we find him out of his place, we feel that it is owing to error, not to impudence; to self-ignorance, not to self-conceit; to the want, not the assumption of feeling. It is thus that brick is peculiarly English in its effect: for we are brutes in many things, and we are ignoramuses in many things, and we are destitute of feeling in many things, but we are *not* coxcombs. It is only by the utmost effort, that some of our most highly gifted junior

gentlemen can attain such distinction of title; and even then the honour sits ill upon them: they are but awkward coxcombs. Affectation\* never was, and never will be, a part of English character; we have too much national pride, too much consciousness of our own dignity and power, too much established self-satisfaction, to allow us to become ridiculous by imitative efforts; and, as it is only by endeavouring to appear what he is not, that a man ever can become so, properly speaking, our true-witted Continental neighbours, who shrink from John Bull as a brute, never laugh at him as a fool. "Il est bête, il n'est pas pourtant sot."

189. The brick house admirably corresponds with this part of English character; for, unable

\* The nation, indeed, possesses one or two interesting individuals, whose affectation is, as we have seen, strikingly manifested in their lake villas: but every rule has its exceptions; and, even on these gifted personages, the affectation sits so very awkwardly, so like a velvet bonnet on a ploughman's carrot hair, that it is evidently a late acquisition. Thus, one proprietor of land on Windermere, who has built unto himself a castellated mansion with round towers, and a Swiss cottage for a stable, has yet, with that admiration of the "neat but not gaudy," which is commonly reported to have influenced the devil when he painted his tail pea-green, painted the rocks at the back of his house pink, that they may look clean. This is a little outcrop of English feeling in the midst of the assumed romance,

as it is to be beautiful, or graceful, or dignified, it is equally unable to be absurd. There is a proud independence about it, which seems conscious of its entire and perfect applicability to those uses for which it was built, and full of a good-natured intention to render every one who seeks shelter within its walls excessively comfortable; it therefore feels awkward in no company; and, wherever it intrudes its good-humoured red face, stares plaster and marble out of countenance with an insensible audacity, which we drive out of such refined company, as we would a clown from a drawing-room, but which we nevertheless seek in its own place, as we would seek the conversation of the clown in his own turnip-field, if he were sensible in the main.

190. Lastly. Brick is admirably adapted for the climate of England, and for the frequent manufacturing nuisances of English blue country: for the smoke, which makes marble look like charcoal, and stucco like mud, only renders brick less glaring in its colour; and the inclement climate, which makes the composition front look as if its architect had been amusing himself by throwing buckets of green water

down from the roof, and before which the granite base of Stirling Castle is mouldering into sand as impotent as ever was ribbed by ripple, wreaks its rage in vain upon the bits of baked clay, leaving them strong, and dry, and stainless, warm and comfortable in their effect, even when neglect has permitted the moss and wall-flower to creep into their crannies, and mellow into something like beauty that which is always comfort. Damp, which fills many stones as it would a sponge, is defied by the brick; and the warmth of every gleam of sunshine is caught by it, and stored up for future expenditure; so that, both actually and in its effect, it is peculiarly suited for a climate whose changes are in general from bad to worse, and from worse to bad.

191. These then are the principal apologies which the brick dwelling-house has to offer for its ugliness. They will, however, only stand it in stead in the simple blue country; and, even there, only when the following points are observed.

First. The brick should neither be of the white, nor the very dark red, kind. The white is worse than useless as a colour: its cold,

raw, sandy neutral has neither warmth enough to relieve, nor grey enough to harmonise with, any natural tones; it does not please the eye by warmth, in shade; it hurts it, by dry heat in sun; it has none of the advantages of effect which brick may have, to compensate for the vulgarity which it must have, and is altogether to be abhorred. The very bright red, again, is one of the ugliest warm colours that art ever stumbled upon: it is never mellowed by damps or anything else, and spoils everything near it by its intolerable and inevitable glare. The moderately dark brick, of a neutral red, is to be chosen, and this, after a year or two, will be farther softened in its colour by atmospheric influence, and will possess all the advantages we have enumerated. It is almost unnecessary to point out its fitness for a damp situation, not only as the best material for securing the comfort of the inhabitant, but because it will the sooner contract a certain degree of softness of tone, occasioned by microscopic vegetation, which will leave no more brick-red than is agreeable to the feelings where the atmosphere is chill.

192. Secondly. Even this kind of red is a



very powerful colour ; and as, in combination with the other primitive colours, very little of it will complete the light, so, very little will answer every purpose in landscape composition, and every addition, above that little, will be disagreeable. Brick, therefore, never should be used in large groups of buildings, where those groups are to form part of landscape scenery: two or three houses, partly shaded with trees, are all that can be admitted at once. There is no object more villainously destructive of natural beauty, than a large town, of very red brick, with very scarlet tiling, very tall chimneys, and very few trees ; while there are few objects that harmonise more agreeably with the feeling of English ordinary landscape, than the large, old, solitary, brick manor house, with its group of dark cedars on the lawn in front, and the tall wrought-iron gates opening down the avenue of approach.

193. Thirdly. No stone quoining, or presence of any contrasting colour, should be admitted. Quoins in general (though, by the by, they are prettily managed in the old Tolbooth of Glasgow, and some other antique buildings in Scotland), are only excusable as giving an

appearance of strength; while their zigzag monotony, when rendered conspicuous by difference of colour, is altogether detestable. White cornices, niches, and the other superfluous introductions in stone and plaster, which some architects seem to think ornamental, only mock what they cannot mend, take away the whole expression of the edifice, render the brick-red glaring and harsh, and become themselves ridiculous in isolation. Besides, as a general principle, contrasts of extensive colour are to be avoided in all buildings, and especially in positive and unmanageable tints. It is difficult to imagine whence the custom of putting stone ornaments into brick buildings could have arisen; unless it be an imitation of the Italian custom of mixing marble with stucco, which affords it no sanction, as the marble is only distinguishable from the general material by the sharpness of the carved edges. The Dutch seem to have been the originators of the custom; and, by the by, if we remember right, in one of the very finest pieces of colouring now extant, a landscape by Rubens (in the gallery at Munich, we think), the artist seems to have sanctioned the barbarism, by

introducing a brick edifice, with white stone quoining. But the truth is that he selected the subject, partly under the influence of domestic feelings, the place being, as it is thought, his own habitation, and partly as a piece of practice, presenting such excessive difficulties of colour, as he, the lord of colour, who alone could overcome them, would peculiarly delight in overcoming; and the harmony with which he has combined tints of the most daring force, and sharpest apparent contrast, in the edgy building, and opposed them to an uninteresting distance of excessive azure (simple blue country, observe), is one of the chief wonders of the painting: so that this masterpiece can no more furnish an apology for the continuance of a practice which, though it gives some liveliness of character to the warehouses of Amsterdam, is fit only for a place whose foundations are mud, and whose inhabitants are partially animated cheeses,—than Caravaggio's custom of painting blackguards should introduce an ambition among mankind in general of becoming fit subjects for his pencil. We shall have occasion again to allude to this subject, in speaking of Dutch street effects.

194. Fourthly. It will generally be found to agree best with the business-like air of the blue country, if the house be excessively simple, and apparently altogether the minister of utility ; but, where it is to be extensive, or tall, a few decorations about the upper windows are desirable. These should be quiet and severe in their lines, and cut boldly in the brick itself. Some of the minor streets in the King of Sardinia's capital are altogether of brick, very richly charged with carving, with excellent effect, and furnish a very good model. Of course no delicate ornament can be obtained, and no classical lines can be allowed ; for we should be horrified by seeing that in brick which we have been accustomed to see in marble. The architect must be left to his own taste for laying on, sparingly and carefully, a few dispositions of well proportioned line, which are all that can ever be required.

195. These broad principles are all that need be attended to in simple blue country : anything will look well in it which is not affected ; and the architect, who keeps comfort and utility steadily in view, and runs off into no expatiations of fancy, need never be afraid here of falling into error.

*B. The Picturesque Blue Country.*

196. But the case is different with the picturesque blue country.\* Here, owing to the causes mentioned in the notes at p. 137, we have some of the most elevated bits of landscape character, which the country, whatever it may be, can afford. Its first and most distinctive peculiarity is its grace; it is all undulation and variety of line, one curve passing into another with the most exquisite softness, rolling away into faint and far outlines of various depth and decision, yet none hard or harsh; and in all probability rounded off in the near ground into massy forms of partially wooded hill, shaded downwards into winding dingles or cliffy ravines, each form melting imperceptibly into the next, without an edge or angle.

197. Its next character is mystery. It is a country peculiarly distinguished by its possessing features of great sublimity in the distance, without giving any hint in the foreground of

\* In leaving simple blue country, we hope it need hardly be said that we leave bricks at once and for ever. Nothing can excuse them out of their proper territory.

their actual nature. A range of mountain, seen from a mountain peak, may have sublimity, but not the mystery with which it is invested, when seen rising over the farthest surge of misty blue, where everything near is soft and smiling, totally separated in nature from the consolidated clouds of the horizon. The picturesque blue country is sure, from the nature of the ground, to present some distance of this kind, so as never to be without a high and ethereal mystery.

198. The third and last distinctive attribute is sensuality. This is a startling word, and requires some explanation. In the first place, every line is voluptuous, floating, and wavy in its form; deep, rich, and exquisitely soft in its colour; drowsy in its effect; like slow wild music; letting the eye repose on it, as on a wreath of cloud, without one feature of harshness to hurt, or of contrast to awaken. In the second place, the cultivation, which, in the simple blue country, has the forced formality of growth which evidently is to supply the necessities of man, here seems to leap into the spontaneous luxuriance of life, which is fitted to minister to his pleasures.

The surface of the earth exults with animation, especially tending to the gratification of the senses ; and, without the artificialness which reminds man of the necessity of his own labour, without the opposing influences which call for his resistance, without the vast energies that remind him of his impotence, without the sublimity that can call his noblest thoughts into action, yet, with every perfection that can tempt him to indolence of enjoyment, and with such abundant bestowal of natural gifts, as might seem to prevent that indolence from being its own punishment, the earth appears to have become a garden of delight, wherein the sweep of the bright hills, without chasm or crag, the flow of the bending rivers, without rock or rapid, and the fruitfulness of the fair earth, without care or labour on the part of its inhabitants, appeal to the most pleasant passions of eye and sense, calling for no effort of body, and impressing no fear on the mind. In hill country we have a struggle to maintain with the elements; in simple blue, we have not the luxuriance of delight: here, and here only, all nature combines to breathe over us a lulling slumber, through which life degenerates into sensation.

199. These considerations are sufficient to explain what we mean by the epithet "sensuality." Now, taking these three distinctive attributes, the mysterious, the graceful, and the voluptuous, what is the whole character? Very nearly—the Greek: for these attributes, common to all picturesque blue country, are modified in the degree of their presence by every climate. In England they are all low in their tone; but as we go southward, the voluptuousness becomes deeper in feeling as the colours of the earth and the heaven become purer and more passionate, and "the purple of ocean deepest of dye;" the mystery becomes mightier, for the greater and more universal energy of the beautiful permits its features to come nearer, and to rise into the sublime, without causing fear. It is thus that we get the essence of the Greek feeling, as it was embodied in their finest imaginations, as it showed itself in the works of their sculptors and their poets, in which sensation was made almost equal with thought, and deified by its nobility of association; at once voluptuous, refined, dreamily mysterious, infinitely beautiful. Hence, it appears that the spirit of this blue



country is essentially Greek; though, in England and in other northern localities, that spirit is possessed by it in a diminished and degraded degree. It is also the natural dominion of the villa, possessing all the attributes which attracted the Romans, when, in their hours of idleness, they lifted the light arches along the echoing promontories of Tiber. It is especially suited to the expression of the edifice of pleasure; and, therefore, is most capable of being adorned by it.

200. The attention of every one about to raise himself a villa of any kind should, therefore, be directed to this kind of country; first, as that in which he will not be felt to be an intruder; secondly, as that which will, in all probability, afford him the greatest degree of continuous pleasure, when his eye has become accustomed to the features of the locality. To the human mind, as on the average constituted, the features of hill scenery will, by repetition, become tiresome, and of wood scenery, monotonous; while the simple blue can possess little interest of any kind. Powerful intellect will generally take perpetual delight in hill residence; but the general mind soon feels

itself oppressed with a peculiar melancholy and weariness, which it is ashamed to own; and we hear our romantic gentlemen begin to call out about the want of society, while, if the animals were fit to live where they have forced themselves, they would never want more society than that of a grey stone, or of a clear pool of gushing water. On the other hand, there are few minds so degraded as not to feel greater pleasure in the picturesque blue than in any other country. Its distance has generally grandeur enough to meet their moods of aspiration; its near aspect is that of a more human interest than that of hill country, and harmonises more truly with the domestic feelings which are common to all mankind; so that, on the whole, it will be found to maintain its freshness of beauty to the habituated eye, in a greater degree than any other scenery.

201. As it thus persuades us to inhabit it, it becomes a point of honour not to make the attractiveness of its beauty its destruction; especially as, being the natural dominion of the villa, it affords great opportunity for the architect to exhibit variety of design.

Its spirit has been proved to be Greek;





J Ruskin

Allen & Co. St.

Nice. 1840

and therefore, though that spirit is slightly manifested in Britain, and though every good architect is shy of importation, villas on Greek and Roman models are admissible here. Still, as in all blue country there is much activity of life, the principle of utility should be kept in view, and the building should have as much simplicity as can be united with perfect gracefulness of line. It appears from the principles of composition alluded to in speaking of the Italian villa, that in undulating country the forms should be square and massy; and, where the segments of curves are small, the buildings should be low and flat, while they may be prevented from appearing cumbrous by some well-managed irregularity of design, which will be agreeable to the inhabitant as well as to the spectator; enabling him to change the aspect and size of his chamber, as temperature or employment may render such change desirable, without being foiled in his design, by finding the apartments of one wing matched, foot to foot, by those of the other.

202. For the colour, it has been shown that white or pale tints are agreeable in all blue country: but there must be warmth in it, and

a great deal too,—grey being comfortless and useless with a cold distance; but it must not be raw or glaring.\* The roof and chimneys should be kept out of sight as much as possible; and therefore the one very flat, and the other very plain. We ought to revive the Greek custom of roofing with thin slabs of coarse marble, cut into the form of tiles. However, where the architect finds he has a very

\* The epithet “raw,” by the by, is vague, and needs definition. Every tint is raw which is perfectly opaque, and has not all the three primitive colours in its composition. Thus, black is always raw, because it has no colour; white never, because it has all colours. No tint can be raw which is not opaque; and opacity may be taken away, either by actual depth and transparency, as in the sky; by lustre and texture, as in the case of silk and velvet, or by variety of shade as in forest verdure. Two instances will be sufficient to prove the truth of this. Brick, when first fired, is always raw; but when it has been a little weathered, it acquires a slight blue tint, assisted by the grey of the mortar: incipient vegetation affords it the yellow. It thus obtains an admixture of the three colours, and is raw no longer. An old woman’s red cloak, though glaring, is never raw; for it must of necessity have folded shades: those shades are of a rich grey; no grey can exist without yellow and blue. We have then three colours, and no rawness. It must be observed however, that when any one of the colours is given in so slight a degree that it can be overpowered by certain effects of light, the united colour, when opaque, will be raw. Thus many flesh-colours are raw; because, though they must have a little blue in their composition, it is too little to be efficiently visible in a strong light.

cool distance, and few trees about the building, and where it stands so high as to preclude the possibility of its being looked down upon, he will, if he be courageous, use a very flat roof of the dark Italian tile. The eaves, which are all that should be seen, will be peculiarly graceful; and the sharp contrast of colour (for this tiling can only be admitted with white walls) may be altogether avoided, by letting them cast a strong shadow, and by running the walls up into a range of low garret windows, to break the horizontal line of the roof. He will thus obtain a bit of very strong colour, which will impart a general glow of cheerfulness to the building, and which, if he manages it rightly, will not be glaring nor intrusive. It is to be observed, however, that he can only do this with villas of the most humble order, and that he will seldom find his employer possessed of so much commonsense as to put up with a tile roof. When this is the case, the flat slabs of the upper limestone (rag-stone) are usually better than slate.

203. For the rest, it is always to be kept in view, that the prevailing character of the whole is to be that of graceful simplicity;

distinguished from the simplicity of the Italian edifice, by being that of utility instead of that of pride.\* Consequently the building must *not* be Gothic or Elizabethan : it may be as commonplace as the proprietor likes, provided its proportions be good ; but nothing can ever excuse one acute angle, or one decorated pinnacle,—both being direct interruption of the repose with which the eye is indulged by the undulations of the surrounding scenery. Tower and fortress outlines are indeed agreeable, for their fine grouping and roundness ; but we do not allude to them, because nothing can be more absurd than the humour prevailing at the present day among many of our peaceable old gentlemen, who never smelt powder in their lives, to eat their morning muffin in a savage-looking round tower, and admit quiet old ladies to a tea-party under the range of twenty-six cannon, which—it is lucky for the china—are all wooden ones,—as they are, in all probability, accurately and awfully pointed into the drawing-room windows.

\* There must always be a difficulty in building in picturesque blue country in England ; for the English character is opposed to that of the country : it is neither graceful, nor mysterious, nor voluptuous ; therefore, what we cede to the country, we take from the nationality, and *vice versâ*.



So much then for our British blue country, to which it was necessary to devote some time, as occupying a considerable portion of the island, and being peculiarly well adapted for villa residences.

*C. The Woody or Green Country.*

204. The woody, or green country, which is next in order, was spoken of before, and was shown to be especially our own. The Elizabethan was pointed out as the style peculiarly belonging to it; and farther criticism of that style was deferred until we came to the consideration of domestic buildings provided with the means of defence. We have therefore at present only to offer a few remarks on the principles to be observed in the erection of Elizabethan villas at the present day.

205. First. The building must be either quite chaste, or excessively rich in decoration. Every inch of ornament short of a certain quantity will render the whole effect poor and ridiculous; while the pure perpendicular lines of this architecture will always look well if left entirely alone. The architect therefore, when limited as to expense, should content himself with

making his oriels project boldly, channelling their mullions richly, and, in general, rendering his vertical lines delicate and beautiful in their workmanship; but, if his estimate be unlimited, he should lay on his ornament richly, taking care never to confuse the eye.

Those parts to which, of necessity, observation is especially directed, must be finished so as to bear a close scrutiny, that the eye may rest on them with satisfaction: but their finish must not be of a character which would have attracted the eye by itself, without being placed in a conspicuous situation; for, if it were, the united attraction of form and detail would confine the contemplation altogether to the parts so distinguished, and render it impossible for the mind to receive any impression of general effect.

Consequently, the parts that project, and are to bear a strong light, must be chiselled with infinite delicacy; so that the ornament, though it would have remained unobserved had the eye not been guided to it, when observed, may be of distinguished beauty and power; but those parts which are to be flat and in shade should be marked with great sharpness

and boldness, that the impression may be equalised.

When, for instance, we have to do with oriels, to which attention is immediately attracted by their projection, we may run wreaths of the finest flower-work up the mullions, charge the terminations with shields, and quarter them richly; but we must join the window to the wall, where its shadow falls, by means of more deep and decided decoration.

206. Secondly. In the choice and design of his ornaments, the architect should endeavour to be grotesque rather than graceful (though little bits of soft flower-work here and there will relieve the eye): but he must not imagine he can be grotesque by carving faces with holes for eyes and knobs for noses; on the contrary, whenever he mimics grotesque life, there should be wit and humour in every feature, fun and frolic in every attitude; every distortion should be anatomical, and every monster a studied combination. This is a question, however, relating more nearly to Gothic architecture and therefore we shall not enter into at present.\*

[\* See *Stones of Venice*, vol. III. chap. iii.]

207. Thirdly. The gables must on no account be jagged into a succession of right angles, as if people were to be perpetually engaged in trotting up one side and down the other. This custom, though sanctioned by authority, has very little apology to offer for itself, based on any principle of composition. In street effect indeed it is occasionally useful; and where the verticals below are unbroken by ornament, may be used even in the detached Elizabethan, but not when decoration has been permitted below. They should then be carried up in curved lines, alternating with two angles, or three at the most, without pinnacles or hip-knobs. A hollow parapet is far better than a battlement, in the intermediate spaces; the latter indeed is never allowable, except when the building has some appearance of being intended for defence, and therefore is generally barbarous in the villa; while the parapet admits of great variety of effect.

208. Lastly. Though the grotesque of Elizabethan architecture is adapted for wood country, the grotesque of the clipped garden, which frequently accompanies it, is not. The custom of clipping trees into fantastic forms is always



J. Ruskin

Zug, 1835

p. 272



to be reprehended: first, because it never can produce the true grotesque, for the material is not passive, and, therefore, a perpetual sense of restraint is induced, while the great principle of the grotesque is action; again, because we have a distinct perception of two natures, the one neutralizing the other; for the vegetable organisation is too palpable to let the animal form suggest its true idea; again, because the great beauty of all foliage is the energy of life and action, of which it loses the appearance by formal clipping; and again, because the hands of the gardener will never produce anything really spirited or graceful. Much, however, need not be said on this subject; for the taste of the public does not now prompt them to such fettering of fair freedom, and we should be as sorry to see the characteristic vestiges of it, which still remain in a few gardens, lost altogether, as to see the thing again becoming common.

209. The garden of the Elizabethan villa, then, should be laid out with a few simple terraces near the house, so as to unite it well with the ground; lines of balustrade along the edges, guided away into the foliage of the

taller trees of the garden, with the shadows falling at intervals. The balusters should be square rather than round, with the angles outward; and if the balustrade looks unfinished at the corners, it may be surmounted by a grotesque bit of sculpture, of any kind; but it must be very strong and deep in its carved lines, and must not be large; and all graceful statues are to be avoided, for the reasons mentioned in speaking of the Italian villa: neither is the terraced part of the garden to extend to any distance from the house, nor to have deep flights of steps, for they are sure to get mossy and slippery, if not superintended with troublesome care; and the rest of the garden should have more trees than flowers in it. A flower-garden is an ugly thing, even when best managed: it is an assembly of unfortunate beings, pampered and bloated above their natural size, stewed and heated into diseased growth; corrupted by evil communication into speckled and inharmonious colours; torn from the soil which they loved, and of which they were the spirit and the glory, to glare away their term of tormented life among the mixed and incongruous essences of each



other, in earth that they know not, and in air that is poison to them.

210. The florist may delight in this: the true lover of flowers never will. He who has taken lessons from nature, who has observed the real purpose and operation of flowers; how they flush forth from the brightness of the earth's being, as the melody rises up from among the moved strings of the instrument; how the wildness of their pale colours passes over her, like the evidence of a various emotion; how the quick fire of their life and their delight glows along the green banks, where the dew falls the thickest, and the mists of incense pass slowly through the twilight of the leaves, and the intertwined roots make the earth tremble with strange joy at the feeling of their motion; he who has watched this will never take away the beauty of their being to mix into meretricious glare, or to feed into an existence of disease. And the flower-garden is as ugly in effect as it is unnatural in feeling: it never will harmonise with anything, and if people will have it, should be kept out of sight till they get into it.

211. But, in laying out the garden which is to assist the effect of the building, we must

observe, and exclusively use, the natural combinations of flowers.\* Now, as far as we are aware, bluish purple is the only flower colour which Nature ever uses in masses of distant effect; this, however, she does in the case of most heathers, with the Rhododendron

\* Every one who is about to lay out a limited extent of garden, in which he wishes to introduce many flowers, should read and attentively study, first Shelley, and next Shakspeare. The latter indeed induces the most beautiful connexions between thought and flower that can be found in the whole range of European literature; but he very often uses the symbolical effect of the flower, which it can only have on the educated mind, instead of the natural and true effect of the flower, which it must have, more or less, upon every mind. Thus, when Ophelia, presenting her wild flowers, says, "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts:" the infinite beauty of the passage depends entirely upon the arbitrary meaning attached to the flowers. But, when Shelley speaks of

"The lily of the vale,  
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,  
That the light of her tremulous bells is seen  
Through their pavilion of tender green,"

he is etherealising an impression which the mind naturally receives from the flower. Consequently, as it is only by their natural influence that flowers can address the mind through the eye, we must read Shelley, to learn how to use flowers, and Shakspeare, to learn to love them. In both writers we find the wild flower possessing soul as well as life, and mingling its influence most intimately, like an untaught melody, with the deepest and most secret streams of human emotion.

ferrugineum, and, less extensively, with the colder colour of the wood hyacinth. Accordingly, the large rhododendron may be used to almost any extent, in masses; the pale varieties of the rose more sparingly; and, on the turf, the wild violet and pansy should be sown by chance, so that they may grow in undulations of colour, and should be relieved by a few primroses. All dahlias, tulips, ranunculi, and, in general, what are called florist's flowers, should be avoided like garlic.

212. Perhaps we should apologise for introducing this in the *Architectural Magazine*; but it is not out of place: the garden is almost a necessary adjunct of the Elizabethan villa, and all garden architecture is utterly useless unless it be assisted by the botanical effect.

These, then, are a few of the more important principles of architecture, which are to be kept in view in the blue and in the green country. The wild, or grey, country is never selected, in Britain, as the site of a villa; and, therefore, it only remains for us to offer a few remarks on a subject as difficult as it is interesting and important, the architecture of the villa in British hill, or brown, country.

## VII.

### THE BRITISH VILLA.—PRINCIPLES OF COMPOSITION.

#### *D. Hill, or Brown Country.*

“Vivite contenti casulis et collibus istis.”—Juvenal [xiv. 179.]

213. IN the Boulevard des Italiens, just at the turning into the Rue la Paix (in Paris), there stand a few dusky and withered trees, beside a kind of dry ditch, paved at the bottom, into which a carriage can with some difficulty descend, and which affords access (not in an unusual manner) to the ground floor of a large and dreary-looking house, whose passages are dark and confined, whose rooms are limited in size, and whose windows command an interesting view of the dusty trees before mentioned.

This is the town residence of one of the Italian noblemen, whose country house has already been figured as a beautiful example of the villas of the Lago di Como. That villa,

however, though in one of the loveliest situations that hill, and wave, and heaven ever combined to adorn, and though itself one of the most delicious habitations that luxury ever projected or wealth procured, is very rarely honoured by the presence of its master ; while attractions of a very different nature retain him, winter after winter, in the dark chambers of the Boulevard des Italiens.

214. This appears singular to the casual traveller, who darts down from the dust and heat of the French capital to the light and glory of the Italian lakes, and finds the tall marble chambers and orange groves, in which he thinks, were he possessed of them, he could luxuriate for ever, left desolate and neglected by their real owner ; but, were he to try such a residence for a single twelvemonth, we believe his wonder would have greatly diminished at the end of the time. For the mind of the nobleman in question does not differ from that of the average of men ; inasmuch as it is a well-known fact that a series of sublime impressions, continued indefinitely, gradually pall upon the imagination, deaden its fineness of feeling, and in the end induce a gloomy and

morbid state of mind, a reaction of a peculiarly melancholy character, because consequent, not upon the absence of that which once caused excitement, but upon the failure of its power.\* This is not the case with all men; but with those over whom the sublimity of an unchanging scene can retain its power for ever, we have nothing to do; for they know better than any architect can, how to choose their scene, and how to add to its effect; we have only to impress upon them the propriety of thinking before they build, and of keeping their humours under the control of their judgment.

215. It is not of them, but of the man of average intellect, that we are thinking throughout all these papers; and upon him it cannot be too strongly impressed, that there are very few points in a hill country at all adapted for a permanent residence. There is a kind of instinct, indeed, by which men become aware of this, and shrink from the sterner features of hill scenery into the parts possessing a human interest; and thus we find the north side of the Lake Lemman, from Vevay to

[\* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. III. chap. x. § 15.]

Geneva, which is about as monotonous a bit of vine-country as any in Europe, studded with villas; while the south side, which is as exquisite a piece of scenery as is to be found in all Switzerland, possesses, we think, two. The instinct in this case is true; but we frequently find it in error. Thus, the Lake of Como is the resort of half Italy, while the Lago Maggiore possesses scarcely one villa of importance, besides those on the Borromeo Islands. Yet the Lago Maggiore is far better adapted for producing and sustaining a pleasurable impression, than that of Como.

216. The first thing, then, which the architect has to do in hill country is to bring his employer down from heroics to common sense; to teach him that, although it might be very well for a man like Pliny,\* whose whole spirit and life was wrapt up in that of Nature, to set himself down under the splash of a cascade 400 feet high, such escapades are not

[\* This passage seems to suggest that the Villa Pliniana on Como was built by Pliny. It was, however, the work of an antiquarian nobleman of the Renaissance, and merely named after the great naturalist, who was born, perhaps, at Como, and mentions an ebbing spring on this site.]

becoming in English gentlemen ; and that it is necessary, for his own satisfaction, as well as that of others, that he should keep in the most quiet and least pretending corners of the landscape which he has chosen.

217. Having got his employer well under control, he has two points to consider. First, where he will spoil least ; and, secondly, where he will gain most.

Now he may spoil a landscape in two ways : either by destroying an association connected with it, or a beauty inherent in it. With the first barbarism we have nothing to do ; for it is one which would not be permitted on a large scale ; and even if it were, could not be perpetrated by any man of the slightest education. No one, having any pretensions to be called a human being, would build himself a house on the meadow of the Rütli, or by the farm of La Haye Sainte, or on the lonely isle on Loch Katrine. Of the injustice of the second barbarism we have spoken already ; and it is the object of this paper to show how it may be avoided, as well as to develop the principles by which we may be guided in the second question ; that of ascertaining how



much permanent pleasure will be received from the contemplation of a given scene.

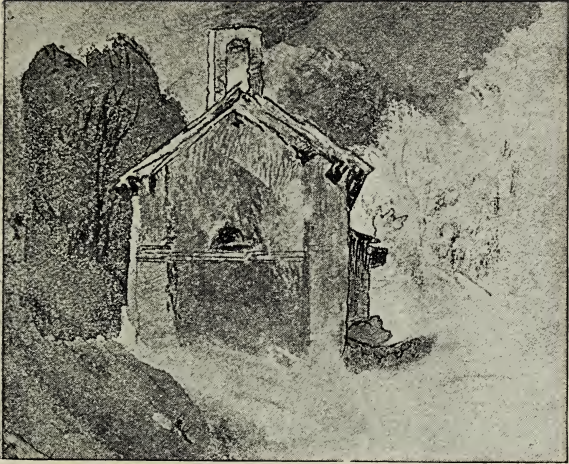
218. It is very fortunate that the result of these several investigations will generally be found the same. The residence which in the end is found altogether delightful, will be found to have been placed where it has committed no injury ; and therefore the best way of consulting our own convenience in the end is, to consult the feelings of the spectator in the beginning.\* Now, the first grand rule for the choice of situation is, never to build a villa where the ground is not richly productive. It is not enough that it should be capable of producing a crop of scanty oats or turnips in a fine season ; it must be rich and luxuriant, and glowing with vegetative power of one kind

\* For instance, one proprietor terrifies the landscape all round him, within a range of three miles, by the conspicuous position of his habitation ; and is punished by finding that, from whatever quarter the wind may blow, it sends in some of his plate-glass. Another spoils a pretty bit of crag by building below it, and has two or three tons of stone dropped through his roof, the first frosty night. Another occupies the turfy slope of some soft lake promontory, and has his cook washed away by the first flood. We do not remember ever having seen a dwelling-house destroying the effect of a landscape, of which, considered merely as a habitation, we should wish to be the possessor.

or another.\* For the very chiefest † part of the character of the edifice of pleasure is, and must be, its perfect ease, its appearance of felicitous repose. This it can never have where the nature and expression of the land near it reminds us of the necessity of labour, and where the earth is niggardly of all that constitutes its beauty and our pleasure; this it can only have where the presence of man seems the natural consequence of an ample provision for his enjoyment, not the continuous struggle of suffering existence with a rude heaven and rugged soil. There is nobility in such a struggle, but not when it is maintained by the inhabitant of the villa, in whom it is unnatural, and therefore injurious in its effect. The narrow cottage on the desolate moor, or the stalwart hospice on the crest of the Alps, each leaves an ennobling impression of energy

\* We are not thinking of the effect upon the human frame of the air which is favourable to vegetation. Chemically considered, the bracing breeze of the more sterile soil is the most conducive to health, and is practically so, when the frame is not perpetually exposed to it; but the keenness which checks the growth of the plant is, in all probability, trying, to say the least, to the constitution of a resident.

† We hope the English language may long retain this corrupt but energetic superlative.



An Alpine Chapel



and endurance; but the possessor of the villa should call, not upon our admiration, but upon our sympathy; and his function is to deepen the impression of the beauty and the fulness of creation, not to exhibit the majesty of man; to show, in the intercourse of earth and her children, not how her severity may be mocked by their heroism, but how her bounty may be honoured in their enjoyment.

219. This position, being once granted, will save us a great deal of trouble; for it will put out of our way, as totally unfit for villa residence, nine-tenths of all mountain scenery; beginning with such bleak and stormy bits of hillside as that which was metamorphosed into something like a forest by the author of "Waverley;" laying an equal veto on all the severe landscapes of such districts of minor mountains as the Scotch Highlands and North Wales; and finishing by setting aside all the higher sublimity of Alp and Apennine. What, then, has it left us? The gentle slope of the lake shore, and the spreading parts of the quiet valley in almost all scenery; and the shores of the Cumberland lakes in our own, distinguished as they are by a richness of soil,

which, though generally manifested only in an exquisite softness of pasture and roundness of undulation, is sufficiently evident to place them out of the sweeping range of this veto.

220. Now, as we have only to do with Britain at present, we shall direct particular attention to the Cumberland lakes, as they are the only mountain district which, taken generally, is adapted for the villa residence, and as every piece of scenery, which in other districts is so adapted, resembles them in character and tone.

We noticed, in speaking of the Westmoreland cottage, the feeling of humility with which we are impressed during a mountain ramble. Now, it is nearly impossible for a villa of large size, however placed, not to disturb and interrupt this necessary and beautiful impression, particularly where the scenery is on a very small scale. This disadvantage may be obviated in some degree, as we shall see, by simplicity of architecture; but another, dependent on a question of proportion, is inevitable.

221. When an object, in which magnitude is a desirable attribute, leaves an impression, on a practised eye, of less magnitude than it

really possesses, we should place objects beside it, of whose magnitude we can satisfy ourselves, of larger size than that which we are accustomed to ; for, by finding these large objects in precisely the proportion to the grand object, to which we *are* accustomed, while we know their actual size to be one to which we are *not* accustomed, we become aware of the true magnitude of the principal feature. But where the object leaves a true impression of its size on the practised eye, we shall do harm by rendering minor objects either larger or smaller than they usually are. Where the object leaves an impression of greater magnitude than it really possesses, we must render the minor objects smaller than they usually are, to prevent our being undeceived.

222. Now, a mountain of 15,000 feet high always looks lower than it really is ; therefore the larger the buildings near it are rendered, the better. Thus, in speaking of the Swiss cottage, it was observed that a building of the size of St. Peter's in its place, would exhibit the size of the mountains more truly and strikingly. A mountain 7000 feet high strikes its impression with great truth ; we are

deceived on neither side ; therefore the building near it should be of the average size ; and thus the villas of the Lago di Como, being among hills from 6000 to 8000 feet high, are well proportioned, being neither colossal nor diminutive : but a mountain 3000 feet high always looks higher than it really is ; \* therefore the buildings near it should be smaller than the average. And this is what is meant by the proportion of objects ; namely, rendering them of such relative size as shall produce the greatest possible impression of those attributes which are most desirable in both. It is not the true, but the desirable impression

\* This position, as well as the two preceding, is important, and in need of confirmation. It has often been observed, that, when the eye is altogether unpractised in estimating elevation, it believes every point to be lower than it really is ; but this does not militate against the proposition, for it is also well known, that the higher the point, the greater the deception. But when the eye is thoroughly practised in mountain measurement, although the judgment, arguing from technical knowledge, gives a true result, the impression on the feelings is always at variance with it, except in hills of the middle height. We are perpetually astonished, in our own country, by the sublime impression left by such hills as Skiddaw, or Cader Idris, or Ben Venue ; perpetually vexed, in Switzerland, by finding that, setting aside circumstances of form and colour, the abstract impression of elevation is (except in some moments of peculiar effect, worth a king's



which is to be conveyed; and it must not be in one, but in both: the building must not be overwhelmed by the mass of the mountain, nor the precipice mocked by the elevation of the cottage. (Proportion of colour is a question of quite a different nature, dependent merely on admixture and combination.)

223. For these reasons, buildings of a very large size are decidedly destructive of effect among the English lakes: first, because apparent altitudes are much diminished by them; and, secondly, because, whatever position they may be placed in, instead of combining with scenery, they occupy and overwhelm it; for all

ransom) inferior to the truth. We were standing the other day on the slope of the Brevent, above the Prieuré of Chamouni, with a companion, well practised in climbing Highland hills, but a stranger among the Alps. Pointing out a rock above the Glacier des Bossons, we requested an opinion of its height. "I should think," was the reply, "I could climb it in two steps; but I am too well used to hills to be taken in in that way; it is at least 40 feet." The real height was 470 feet. This deception is attributable to several causes (independently of the clearness of the medium through which the object is seen), which it would be out of place to discuss here, but the chief of which is the natural tendency of the feelings always to believe objects subtending the same angle to be of the same height. We say the feelings, not the eye; for the practised eye never betrays its possessor, though the due and corresponding mental impression is not received.

scenery is divided into pieces, each of which has a near bit of beauty, a promontory of lichened crag, or a smooth swarded knoll, or something of the kind, to begin with. Wherever the large villa comes, it takes up one of these beginnings of landscape altogether; and the parts of crag or wood, which ought to combine with it, become subservient to it, and lost in its general effect; that is, ordinarily, in a general effect of ugliness. This should never be the case: however intrinsically beautiful the edifice may be, it should assist, but not supersede; join, but not eclipse; appear, but not intrude.

224. The general rule by which we are to determine the size is, to select the largest mass which will not overwhelm any object of fine form, within two hundred yards of it; and if it does not do this, we may be quite sure it is not too large for the distant features: for it is one of Nature's most beautiful adaptations, that she is never out of proportion with herself; that is, the minor details of scenery of the first class bear exactly the proportion to the same species of detail in scenery of the second class, that the large features of the

first bear to the large features of the second. Every mineralogist knows that the quartz of the St. Gothard is as much larger in its crystal than the quartz of Snowdon, as the peak of the one mountain overtops the peak of the other; and that the crystals of the Andes are larger than either.\* Every artist knows that the boulders of an Alpine foreground, and the leaps of an Alpine stream, are as much larger than the boulders, and as much bolder than the leaps, of a Cumberland foreground and torrent, as the Jungfrau is higher than Skiddaw. Therefore, if we take care of the near effect in any country, we need never be afraid of the distant.

225. For these reasons, the cottage villa, rather than the mansion, is to be preferred among our hills: it has been preferred in many instances, and in too many, with an unfortunate result; for the cottage villa is precisely that which affords the greatest scope for

\* This is rather a bold assertion; and we should be sorry to maintain the fact as universal; but the crystals of *almost* all the rarer minerals are larger in the larger mountain; and that altogether independently of the period of elevation, which, in the case of Mont Blanc, is later than that of our own Mendips.

practical absurdity. Symmetry, proportion, and some degree of simplicity, are usually kept in view in the large building; but, in the smaller, the architect considers himself licensed to try all sorts of experiments, and jumbles together pieces of imitation, taken at random from his note-book, as carelessly as a bad chemist mixing elements, from which he may by accident obtain something new, though the chances are ten to one that he obtains something useless. The chemist, however, is more innocent than the architect; for the one throws his trash out of the window, if the compound fail; while the other always thinks his conceit too good to be lost. The great one cause of all the errors in this branch of architecture is, the principle of imitation, at once the most baneful and the most unintellectual, yet perhaps the most natural, that the human mind can encourage or act upon.\* Let it once be thoroughly

\* In § 166 we noticed the kind of error most common in amateur designs, and we traced that error to its great first cause, the assumption of the humour, instead of the true character, for a guide; but we did not sufficiently specify the mode in which that first cause operated, by prompting to imitation. By imitation we do not mean accurate copying, neither do we mean working under the influence of the feelings by which we may suppose the originators of a given

rooted out, and the cottage villa will become a beautiful and interesting element of our landscape.

model to have been actuated ; but we mean the intermediate step of endeavouring to combine old materials in a novel manner. True copying may be disdained by architects, but it should not be disdained by nations ; for when the feelings of the time in which certain styles had their origin have passed away, any examples of the same style will invariably be failures, unless they be copies. It is utter absurdity to talk of building Greek edifices now ; no man ever will, or ever can, who does not believe in the Greek mythology ; and, precisely by so much as he diverges from the technicality of strict copyism, he will err. But we ought to have pieces of Greek architecture, as we have reprints of the most valuable records, and it is better to build a new Parthenon than to set up the old one. Let the dust and the desolation of the Acropolis be undisturbed for ever ; let them be left to be the school of our moral feelings, not of our mechanical perceptions ; the line and rule of the prying carpenter should not come into the quiet and holy places of the earth. Elsewhere, we may build marble models for the education of the national mind and eye ; but it is useless to think of adapting the architecture of the Greek to the purposes of the Frank ; it never has been done, and never will be. We delight, indeed, in observing the rise of such a building as La Madeleine : beautiful, because accurately copied ; useful, as teaching the eye of every passer-by. But we must not think of its purpose ; it is wholly unadapted for Christian worship ; and were it as bad Greek as our National Gallery, it would be equally unfit.

The mistake of our architects in general is, that they fancy they are speaking good English by speaking bad Greek. We wish, therefore, that copying were more in vogue than it is. But imitation, the endeavour to be Gothic, or Tyrolese, or Venetian, without the slightest grain of Gothic or Venetian

226. So much for size. The question of position need not detain us long, as the principles advanced in § 104 are true generally, feeling; the futile effort to splash a building into age, or daub it into dignity, to zigzag it into sanctity, or slit it into ferocity, when its shell is neither ancient nor dignified, and its spirit neither priestly nor baronial,—this is the degrading vice of the age; fostered, as if man's reason were but a step between the brains of a kitten and a monkey, in the mixed love of despicable excitement and miserable mimicry.

If the English have no imagination, they should not scorn to be commonplace; or rather they should remember that poverty cannot be disguised by beggarly borrowing, that it may be ennobled by calm independence. Our national architecture never will improve until our population are generally convinced that in this art, as in all others, they cannot seem what they cannot be. The scarlet coat or the turned-down collar, which the obsequious portrait-painter puts on the shoulders and off the necks of his savage or insane customers, never can make the 'prentice look military, or the idiot poetical; and the architectural appurtenances of Norman embrasure or Veronaic balcony must be equally ineffective, until they can turn shopkeepers into barons, and schoolgirls into Juliets. Let the national mind be elevated in its character, and it will naturally become pure in its conceptions; let it be simple in its desires, and it will be beautiful in its ideas; let it be modest in feeling, and it will not be insolent in stone. For architect and for employer, there can be but one rule; to be natural in all that they do, and to look for the beauty of the material creation as they would for that of the human form, not in the chanceful and changing disposition of artificial decoration, but in the manifestation of the pure and animating spirit which keeps it from the coldness of the grave. [With this remarkable foreshadowing of Mr. Ruskin's Art-teaching compare *Seven Lamps* and *Lectures on Architecture and Painting*, throughout.]

with one exception. Beautiful and calm the situation must always be, but—in England—not conspicuous. In Italy, the dwelling of the descendants of those whose former life has bestowed on every scene the greater part of the majesty which it possesses, ought to have a dignity inherent in it, which would be shamed by shrinking back from the sight of men, and majesty enough to prevent such non-retirement from becoming intrusive; but the spirit of the English landscape is simple, and pastoral, and mild, devoid, also, of high associations (for in the Highlands and Wales almost every spot which has the pride of memory is unfit for villa residence); and, therefore, all conspicuous appearance of its more wealthy inhabitants becomes ostentation, not dignity; impudence, not condescension. Their dwellings ought to be just evident, and no more, as forming part of the gentle animation and present prosperity which is the beauty of cultivated ground. And this partial concealment may be effected without any sacrifice of the prospect which the proprietor will insist upon commanding from his windows, and with great accession to his permanent enjoyment.

227. For, first, the only prospect which is really desirable or delightful, is that from the window of the breakfast-room. This is rather a bold position, but it will appear evident on a little consideration. It is pleasant enough to have a pretty little bit visible from the bedrooms; but, after all, it only makes gentlemen cut themselves in shaving, and ladies never think of anything beneath the sun when they are dressing. Then, in the dining-room, windows are absolutely useless, because dinner is always uncomfortable by daylight, and the weight of furniture effect which adapts the room for the gastronomic rites, renders it detestable as a sitting-room. In the library, people should have something else to do, than looking out of the windows; in the drawing-room, the uncomfortable stillness of the quarter of an hour before dinner, may, indeed, be alleviated by having something to converse about at the windows: but it is very shameful to spoil a prospect of any kind, by looking at it when we are not ourselves in a state of corporal comfort and mental good-humour, which nobody can be after the labour of the day, and before he has been fed. But the



breakfast-room, where we meet the first light of the dewy day, the first breath of the morning air, the first glance of gentle eyes; to which we descend in the very spring and elasticity of mental renovation and bodily energy, in the gathering up of our spirit for the new day, in the flush of our awakening from the darkness and the mystery of faint and inactive dreaming, in the resurrection from our daily grave, in the first tremulous sensation of the beauty of our being, in the most glorious perception of the lightening of our life; there, indeed, our expatiation of spirit, when it meets the pulse of outward sound and joy, the voice of bird and breeze and billow, *does* demand some power of liberty, some space for its going forth into the morning, some freedom of intercourse with the lovely and limitless energy of creature and creation.

228. The breakfast-room must have a prospect, and an extensive one; the hot roll and hyson are indiscussable except under such sweet circumstances. But he must be an awkward architect who cannot afford an opening to one window without throwing the whole mass of the building open to public view;

particularly as, in the second place, the essence of a good window view is the breaking out of the distant features in little well-composed *morceaux*, not the general glare of a mass of one tone. Have we a line of lake? the silver water must glance out here and there among the trunks of near trees, just enough to show where it flows; then break into an open swell of water, just where it is widest, or where the shore is prettiest. Have we mountains? their peaks must appear over foliage or through it, the highest and boldest catching the eye conspicuously, yet not seen from base to summit, as if we wanted to measure them. Such a prospect as this is always compatible with as much concealment as we choose. In all these pieces of management, the architect's chief enemy is the vanity of his employer, who will always want to see more than he ought to see, and than he will have pleasure in seeing, without reflecting how the spectators pay for his peeping.

229. So much, then, for position. We have now only to settle the questions of form and colour, and we shall then have closed the most tiresome investigation which we shall be called

upon to enter into; inasmuch as the principles which we may arrive at in considering the architecture of defence,\* though we hope they may be useful in the abstract, will demand no application to native landscape, in which, happily, no defence is now required; and those relating to sacred edifices will, we also hope, be susceptible of more interest than can possibly be excited by the most degraded branch of the whole art of architecture, one hardly worthy of being included under the name—that, namely, with which we have lately been occupied, whose ostensible object is the mere provision of shelter and comfort for the despicable shell within whose darkness and corruption that purity of perception to which all high art is addressed is, during its immaturity, confined.

230. There are two modes in which any mental or material effect may be increased—by contrast, or by assimilation. Supposing that we have a certain number of features or existences under a given influence; then, by subjecting another feature to the same influence, we increase the universality, and therefore the

[\* Referring again to the intended sequel.]

effect, of that influence; but by introducing another feature, *not* under the same influence, we render the subjection of the other features more palpable, and therefore more effective. For example, let the influence be one of shade, to which a certain number of objects are subjected. We add another feature, subjected to the same influence, and we increase the *general impression* of shade; we add the same feature, *not* subjected to this influence, and we have deepened the *effect* of shade.

Now, the principles by which we are to be guided in the selection of one or other of these means are of great importance, and must be developed before we can conclude the investigation of villa architecture.

231. The impression produced by a given effect or influence depends upon its degree and its duration. Degree always means the proportionate energy exerted. Duration is either into time, or into space, or into both. The duration of colour is in space alone, forming what is commonly called extent. The duration of sound is in space and time; the space being in the size of the waves of air, which give depth to the tone. The duration of mental

emotion is in time alone. Now in all influences, as is the degree, so is the impression; as is the duration, so is the effect of the impression; that is, its permanent operation upon the feelings, or the violence with which it takes possession of our own faculties and senses, as opposed to the abstract impression of its existence, without such operation on our own essence.

For example, the natural tendency of darkness or shade is to induce fear or melancholy. Now, as the degree of the shade, so is the abstract impression of the existence of shade; but as the duration of shade, so is the fear or melancholy excited by it.

Consequently, when we wish to increase the abstract impression of the power of any influence over objects with which we have no connection, we must increase degree; but, when we wish the impression to produce a permanent effect upon ourselves, we must increase duration.

Now, degree is always increased by contrast, and duration by assimilation. A few instances of this will be sufficient.

232. Blue is called a cold colour, because

it induces a feeling of coolness to the eye, and is much used by nature in her cold effects.

Supposing that we have painted a storm scene, in desolate country, with a single miserable cottage somewhere in front; that we have made the atmosphere and the distance cold and blue, and wish to heighten the comfortless impression.

There is an old rag hanging out of the window: shall it be red or blue? If it be red, the piece of warm colour will contrast strongly with the atmosphere; will render its blueness and chilliness immensely more apparent; will increase the *degree* of both, and, therefore, the abstract impression of the existence of cold. But, if it be blue, it will bring the iciness of the distance up into the foreground; will fill the whole visible space with comfortless cold; will take away every relief from the desolation; will increase the *duration* of the influence, and, consequently, will extend its operation into the mind and feelings of the spectator, who will shiver as he looks.

Now, if we are making a *picture*, we shall not hesitate a moment: in goes the red; for the artist, while he wishes to render the actual

impression of the presence of cold in the landscape as strong as possible, does not wish that chilliness to pass over into, or affect, the spectator, but endeavours to make the combination of colour as delightful to his eye and feelings as possible.\* But, if we are painting a *scene* for theatrical representation, where deception is aimed at, we shall be as decided in our proceeding on the opposite principle: in goes the blue; for we wish the idea of cold to pass over into the spectator, and make him so uncomfortable as to permit his fancy to place him distinctly in the place we desire, in the actual scene.

233. Again, Shakspeare has been blamed by some few critical asses for the raillery of Mercutio, and the humour of the nurse, in "Romeo and Juliet;" for the fool in "Lear;" for the porter in "Macbeth;" the grave-diggers in "Hamlet," &c.; because, it is said, these bits interrupt the tragic feeling. No such thing; they enhance it to an incalculable extent; they deepen its *degree*, though they diminish

\* This difference of principle is one leading distinction between the artist, properly so called, and the scene, diorama, or panorama painter.

its duration. And what is the result? that the impression of the agony of the individuals brought before us is far stronger than it could otherwise have been, and our sympathies are more forcibly awakened; while, had the contrast been wanting, the impression of pain would have come over into ourselves; our selfish feeling, instead of our sympathy, would have been awakened; the conception of the grief of others diminished; and the tragedy would have made us very uncomfortable, but never have melted us to tears or excited us to indignation. When he, whose merry and satirical laugh rung in our ears the moment before, faints before us, with "a plague o' both your houses, they have made worms' meat of me," the acuteness of our feeling is excessive: but, had we not heard the laugh before, there would have been a dull weight of melancholy impression, which would have been painful, not affecting.

234. Hence, we see the grand importance of the choice of our means of enhancing effect, and we derive the simple rule for that choice, namely, that, when we wish to increase abstract impression, or to call upon the sympathy of



the spectator, we are to use contrast; but, when we wish to extend the operation of the impression, or to awaken the selfish feelings, we are to use assimilation.

This rule, however, becomes complicated, where the feature of contrast is not altogether passive; that is, where we wish to give a conception of any qualities inherent in that feature, as well as in what it relieves; and, besides, it is not always easy to know whether it will be best to increase the abstract idea, or its operation. In most cases, energy, the degree of influence, is beauty; and, in many, the duration of influence is monotony. In others, duration is sublimity, and energy painful: in a few, energy and duration are attainable and delightful together.

235. It is impossible to give rules for judgment in every case; but the following points must always be observed:—First, when we use contrast, it must be natural and likely to occur. Thus the contrast in tragedy is the natural consequence of the character of human existence; it is what we see and feel every day of our lives. When a contrast is unnatural, it destroys the effect it should enhance.

Canning called on a French refugee in 1794. The conversation naturally turned on the execution of the Queen, then a recent event. Overcome by his feelings, the Parisian threw himself upon the ground, exclaiming, in an agony of tears, "La bonne reine! la pauvre reine!" Presently he sprang up, exclaiming, "Cependant, Monsieur, il faut vous faire voir mon petit chien danser." This contrast, though natural in a Parisian, was unnatural in the nature of things, and therefore injurious.

236. Secondly, when the general influence, instead of being external, is an attribute or energy of the thing itself, so as to bestow on it a permanent character, the contrast which is obtained by the absence of that character is injurious, and becomes what is called an interruption of the unity. Thus, the raw and colourless tone of the Swiss cottage, noticed in § 42, is an injurious contrast to the richness of the landscape, which is an inherent and necessary energy in surrounding objects. So, the character of Italian landscape is curvilinear; therefore, the outline of the buildings entering into its composition must be

arranged on curvilinear principles, as investigated in § 144.

237. Thirdly. But, if the pervading character can be obtained in the single object by different means, the contrast will be delightful. Thus, the elevation of character which the hill districts of Italy possess by the magnificence of their forms, is transmitted to the villa by its dignity of detail and simplicity of outline; and the rectangular interruption to the curve of picturesque blue country, partaking of the nature of that which it interrupts, is a contrast giving relief and interest, while any Elizabethan acute angles, on the contrary, would have been a contrast obtained by the absence of the pervading energy of the universal curvilinear character, and therefore improper.

238. Fourthly, when the general energy, instead of pervading simultaneously the multitude of objects, as with one spirit, is independently possessed and manifested by every individual object, the result is repetition, not unity; and contrast is not merely agreeable, but necessary. Thus, a number of objects, forming the line of beauty, is pervaded by one simple energy; but if that energy is separately

manifested in each, the result is painful monotony. Parallel right lines, without grouping, are always liable to this objection; and, therefore, a distant view of a flat country is never beautiful unless its horizontals are lost in richness of vegetation, as in Lombardy, or broken with masses of forest, or with distant hills. If none of these interruptions take place, there is immediate monotony, and no introduction can be more delightful than such a tower in the distance as Strasburg, or, indeed, than any architectural combination of verticals. Peterborough is a beautiful instance of such an adaptation. It is always, then, to be remembered that repetition is not assimilation.

239. Fifthly, when any attribute is necessarily beautiful, that is, beautiful in every place and circumstance, we need hardly say that the contrast consisting in its absence is painful. It is only when beauty is local or accidental that opposition may be employed.

Sixthly. The *edge* of all contrasts, so to speak, should be as soft as is consistent with decisive effect. We mean, that a gradual change is better than instantaneous transfiguration; for, though always less effective,

it is more agreeable. But this must be left very much to the judgment.

Seventhly. We must be very careful in ascertaining whether any given contrast is obtained by freedom from external, or absence of internal, energy, for it is often a difficult point to decide. Thus, the peace of the Alpine valley might, at first, seem to be a contrast caused by the want of the character of strength and sublimity manifested in the hills; but it is really caused by the freedom from the general and external influence of violence and desolation.

240. These, then, are principles applicable to all arts, without a single exception, and of particular importance in painting and architecture.\* It will sometimes be found that one rule comes in the way of another; in which case, the most important is, of course, to be obeyed; but, in general, they will afford us an easy means of arriving at certain results, when, before, our conjectures must have been vague and unsatisfactory.

We may now proceed to determine the

[\* For further discussion of which, see *Elements of Drawing*, Letter III.]

most proper *form* for the mountain villa of England.

241. We must first observe the prevailing lines of the near hills: if they are vertical, there will most assuredly be monotony, for the vertical lines of crag are never grouped, and accordingly, by our fourth rule, the prevailing lines of our edifice must be horizontal. On the Lake of Thun the tendency of the hills is vertical; this tendency is repeated by the buildings,\* and the composition becomes thoroughly bad; but on the Lake of Como we have the same vertical tendency in the hills, while the grand lines of the buildings are horizontal, and the composition is good. But, if the prevailing lines of the near hills be curved (and they will be either curved or vertical), we must not interrupt their character, for the energy is then pervading, not individual; and, therefore, our edifice must be rectangular.

In both cases, therefore, the grand outline of the villa is the same; but in one we have it set off by contrast, in the other by assimilation; and we must work out in the architecture

[\* In their turrets and pinnacles, as shown by a poor woodcut in the magazine, not worth reproduction.]

of each edifice the principle on which we have begun. Commencing with that in which we are to work by contrast: the vertical crags must be the result of violence, and the influence of destruction, of distortion, of torture, to speak strongly, must be evident in their every line. We free the building from this influence, and give it repose, gracefulness, and ease; and we have a contrast of feeling as well as of line, by which the desirable attributes are rendered evident in both objects, while the *duration* of neither energy being allowed, there can be no disagreeable effect upon the spectator, who will not shrink from the terror of the crags, nor feel a want of excitement in the gentleness of the building.

242. Secondly, Solitude is powerful and evident in its effect on the distant hills; therefore the effect of the villa should be joyous and life-like (not flippant, however, but serene); and, by rendering it so, we shall enhance the sublimity of the distance, as we showed in speaking of the Westmoreland cottage; and, therefore, we may introduce a number of windows with good effect, provided that they are kept in horizontal lines, and do not

disturb the repose which we have shown to be necessary.

These three points of contrast will be quite enough: there is no other external influence from which we can free the building, and the pervading energy must be communicated to it, or it will not harmonise with our feelings; therefore, before proceeding, we had better determine how this contrast is to be carried out in detail.

243. Our lines are to be horizontal; then the roof must be as flat as possible. We need not think of snow, because, however much we may slope the roof, it will not slip off from the material, which, here, is the only proper one; and the roof of the cottage is always very flat, which it would not be if there were any inconvenience attending such a form. But, for the sake of the second contrast, we are to have gracefulness and ease, as well as horizontality. Then we must break the line of the roof into different elevations, yet not making the difference great, or we shall have visible verticals. And this must not be done at random.

244. Take a flat line of beauty, *a d*, fig. 14,



for the length of the edifice. Strike  $a b$  horizontally from  $a$ ,  $c d$  from  $d$ ; let fall the verticals, make  $c f$  equal  $m n$ , the maximum; and draw  $h f$ . The curve should be so far continued as that  $h f$  shall be to  $c d$  as  $c d$  to  $a b$ . Then we are sure of a beautifully proportioned form. Much variety may be introduced by using different curves; joining parabolas with

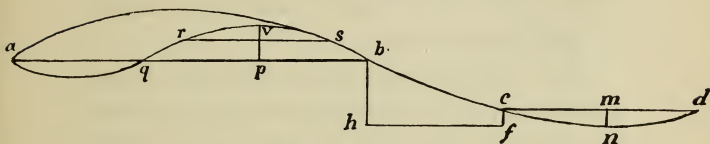


Fig. 14. Leading lines of Villa-composition.

cycloids, &c.; but the use of curves is always the best mode of obtaining good forms.\*

Further ease may be obtained by added combinations. For instance, strike another curve ( $a q b$ ) through the flat line  $a b$ ; bisect the maximum  $v p$ , draw the horizontal  $r s$ , (observing to make the largest maximum of this curve towards the smallest maximum of the great curve, to restore the balance), join  $r q$ ,  $s b$ , and we have another modification of the same

[\* Compare *Modern Painters*, vol. IV. chap. xvii. § 49, and *Elements of Drawing*, Letter III.]

beautiful form. This may be done in either side of the building, but not in both.

245. Then, if the flat roof be still found monotonous, it may be interrupted by garret windows, which must not be gabled, but turned with the curve  $a b$ , whatever that may be. This will give instant humility to the building, and take away any vestiges of Italian character which might hang about it, and which would be wholly out of place.

The windows may have tolerably broad architraves, but no cornices; an ornament both haughty and classical in its effect, and, on both accounts, improper here. They should be in level lines, but grouped at unequal distances, or they will have a formal and artificial air, unsuited to the irregularity and freedom around them. Some few of them may be arched, however, with the curve  $a b$ , the mingling of the curve and the square being very graceful. There should not be more than two tiers and the garrets, or the building will be too high.

So much for the general outline of the villa, in which we are to work by contrast. Let us pass over to that in which we are to work by assimilation, before speaking of the material

and colour which should be common to both.

246. The grand outline must be designed on exactly the same principles ; for the curvilinear proportions, which were opposition before, will now be assimilation. Of course, we do not mean to say that every villa in a hill country should have the form *a b c d* ; we should be tired to death if they had : but we bring forward that form as an example of the agreeable result of the principles on which we should always work, but whose result should be the same in no two cases. A modification of that form, however, will frequently be found useful ; for, under the depression *h f*, we may have a hall of entrance and of exercise, which is a requisite of extreme importance in hill districts, where it rains three hours out of four all the year round ; and under *c d* we may have the kitchen, servants' rooms, and coach-house, leaving the large division quiet and comfortable.

247. Then, as in the curved country there is no such distortion as that before noticed, no such evidence of violent agency, we need not be so careful about the appearance of perfect

peace ; we may be a little more dignified and a little more classical. The windows may be symmetrically arranged ; and, if there be a blue and undulating distance, the upper tier may even have cornices ; narrower architraves are to be used ; the garrets may be taken from the roof, and their inmates may be accommodated in the other side of the house ; but we must take care, in doing this, not to become Greek. The material, as we shall see presently, will assist us in keeping unclassical ; and not a vestige of column or capital must appear in any part of the edifice. All should be pure, but all should be English ; and there should be here, as elsewhere, much of the utilitarian about the whole, suited to the cultivated country in which it is placed.

248. It will never do to be speculative or imaginative in our details, on the supposition that the tendency of fine scenery is to make everybody imaginative and enthusiastic. Enthusiasm has no business with Turkey carpets or easy-chairs ; and the very preparation of comfort for the body, which the existence of the villa supposes, is inconsistent with the supposition of any excitement of mind ; and

this is another reason for keeping the domestic building in richly productive country. Nature has set aside her sublime bits for us to feel and think in ; she has pointed out her productive bits for us to sleep and eat in ; and, if we sleep and eat amongst the sublimity, we are brutal ; if we poetise amongst the cultivation, we are absurd. There are the time and place for each state of existence, and we should not jumble that which Nature has separated. She has addressed herself, in one part, wholly to the mind ; there is nothing for us to eat but bilberries, nothing to rest upon but rock, and we have no business to concoct picnics, and bring cheese, and ale, and sandwiches, in baskets, to gratify our beastly natures, where Nature never intended us to eat (if she had, we needn't have brought the baskets). In the other part, she has provided for our necessities ; and we are very absurd, if we make ourselves fantastic, instead of comfortable. Therefore, all that we ought to do in the hill villa is, to adapt it for the habitation of a man of the highest faculties of perception and feeling ; but only for the habitation of his hours of common sense, not of enthusiasm ; it must be his

dwelling as a man, not as a spirit ; as a thing liable to decay, not as an eternal energy ; as a perishable, not as an immortal.

249. Keeping, then, in view these distinctions of form between the two villas, the remaining considerations relate equally to both. We have several times alluded to the extreme richness and variety of hill foreground, as an internal energy to which there must be no contrast. Rawness of colour is to be especially avoided, but so, also, is poverty of effect. It will, therefore, add much to the beauty of the building, if in any conspicuous and harsh angle, or shadowy moulding, we introduce a wreath of carved leafwork,—in stone, of course. This sounds startling and expensive ; but we are not thinking of expense : what ought to be, not what can be afforded, is the question. Besides, when all expense in shamming castles, building pinnacles, and all other fantasticisms has been shown to be injurious, that which otherwise would have been wasted in plaster battlements, to do harm, may surely be devoted to stone leafage, to do good. Now, if there be too much, or too conspicuous, ornament, it will destroy simplicity and humility, and

everything which we have been endeavouring to get; therefore, the architect must be careful, and had better have immediate recourse to that natural beauty with which he is now endeavouring to assimilate.

250. When Nature determines on decorating a piece of projecting rock, she begins with the bold projecting surface, to which the eye is naturally drawn by its form, and (observe how closely she works by the principles which were before investigated) she finishes this with lichens and mingled colours, to a degree of delicacy, which makes us feel that we never can look close enough; but she puts in not a single mass of form to attract the eye, more than the grand outline renders necessary. But, where the rock joins the ground, where the shadow falls, and the eye is not attracted, she puts in bold forms of ornament, large leaves and grass, bunches of moss and heather, strong in their projection, and deep in their colour. Therefore, the architect must act on precisely the same principle: his outward surfaces he may leave the wind and weather to finish in their own way; but he cannot allow Nature to put grass and weeds into the shadows;

*ergo*, he must do it himself; and, whenever the eye loses itself in shade, wherever there is a dark and sharp corner, there, if he can, he should introduce a wreath of flower-work. The carving will be preserved from the weather by this very propriety of situation: it would have mouldered away, had it been exposed to the full drift of the rain, but will remain safe in the crevices where it is required; and, also, it will not injure the general effect, but will lie concealed until we approach, and then rise up, as it were, out of the darkness, to its duty; bestowing on the dwellings that finish of effect which is manifested around them, and gratifying the natural requirements of the mind for the same richness in the execution of the designs of men, which it has found on a near approach lavished so abundantly, in a distant view subdued so beautifully into the large effect of the designs of Nature.

251. Of the ornament itself, it is to be observed that it is not to be what is properly called architectural *decoration* (that which is "decorous," becoming, or suitable to), namely, the combination of minor forms, which repeat the lines, and partake of the essence of the





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Woodwork and Vine: Abbeville



grand design, and carry out its meaning and life into its every member ; but it is to be true sculpture ; the presenting of a pure ideality of form to the eye, which may give perfect conception, without the assistance of colour : it is to be the stone image of vegetation, not botanically accurate, indeed, but sufficiently near to permit us to be sure of the intended flower or leaf. Not a single line of any other kind of ornament should be admitted, and there should be more leafage than flowerwork, as it is the more easy in its flow and outline. Deep relief need not be attempted, but the edges of the leafage should be clearly and delicately defined. The cabbage, the vine, and the ivy are the best and most beautiful leaves : oak is a little too stiff, otherwise good. Particular attention ought to be paid to the ease of the stems and tendrils ; such care will always be repaid. And it is to be especially observed, that the carving is not to be arranged in garlands or knots, or any other formalities, as in Gothic work ; but the stalks are to rise out of the stone, as if they were rooted in it, and to fling themselves down where they are wanted, disappearing again in light sprays, as if they were still growing.

252. All this will require care in designing; but, as we have said before, we can always do without decoration; but, if we have it, it *must* be well done. It is not of the slightest use to economise; every farthing improperly saved does a shilling's worth of damage; and that is getting a bargain the wrong way. When one branch or group balances another, they *must* be different in composition. The same group may be introduced several times in different parts, but not when there is correspondence, or the effect will be unnatural; and it can hardly be too often repeated, that the *ornament* must be kept out of the general effect, must be invisible to all but the near observer, and, even to him, must not become a necessary part of the design, but must be sparingly and cautiously applied, so as to appear to have been thrown in by chance here and there, as Nature would have thrown in a bunch of herbage, affording adornment without concealment, and relief without interruption.

253. So much for form. The question of colour has already been discussed at some length, in speaking of the cottage; but it is to be noticed, that the villa, from the nature of

its situation, gets the higher hills back into a distance which is three or four times more blue than any piece of scenery entering into combination with the cottage; so that more warmth of colour is allowable in the building, as well as greater cheerfulness of effect. It should not look like stone, as the cottage should, but should tell as a building on the mind as well as the eye. White, therefore, is frequently allowable in small quantities, particularly on the border of a large and softly shored lake, like Windermere and the foot of Loch Lomond; but cream-colour, and putty-colour, and the other varieties of plaster-colour are inexcusable. If more warmth is required by the situation than the sun will give on white, the building should be darkened at once. A warm rich grey is always beautiful in any place and under any circumstance; and, in fact, unless the proprietor likes to be kept damp like a travelling cod-fish, by trees about his house and close to it (which, if it be white, he must have, to prevent glare), such a grey is the only colour which will be beautiful, or even innocent. The difficulty is to obtain it; and this naturally leads to the question of material.

254. If the colour is to be white, we can have no ornament, for the shadows would make it far too conspicuous, and we should get only tawdriness. The simple forms may be executed in anything that will stand wet; and the roof, in all cases, should be of the coarse slate of the country, as rudely put on as possible. They must be kept clear of moss and conspicuous vegetation, or there will be an improper appearance of decay; but the more lichenous the better, and the rougher the slate the sooner it is coloured. If the colour is to be grey, we may use the grey primitive limestone, which is not ragged on the edges, without preparing the blocks too smoothly; or the more compact and pale-coloured slate, which is frequently done in Westmoreland; and execute the ornaments in any very coarse dark marble. Greenstone is an excellent rock, and has a fine surface, but it is unmanageable. The greyer granites may often be used with good effect, as well as the coarse porphyries, when the grey is to be particularly warm. An outward surface of a loose block may be often turned to good account in turning an angle; as the colours which it has contracted

by its natural exposure will remain on it without inducing damp. It is always to be remembered, that he who prefers neatness to beauty, and who would have sharp angles and clean surfaces, in preference to curved outlines and lichenous colour, has no business to live among hills.

255. Such, then, are the principal points to be kept in view in the edifice itself. Of the mode of uniting it with the near features of foliage and ground, it would be utterly useless to speak: it is a question of infinite variety, and involving the whole theory of composition, so that it would take up volumes to develop principles sufficient to guide us to the result which the feeling of the practised eye would arrive at in a moment. The inequalities of the ground, the character and colour of those inequalities, the nature of the air, the exposure, and the consequent fall of the light, the quantity and form of near and distant foliage, all have their effect on the design, and should have their influence on the designer, inducing, as they do, a perfect change of circumstance in every locality. Only one general rule can be given, and that we repeat. The house

must *not* be a noun substantive, it must not stand by itself, it must be part and parcel of a proportioned whole: it must not even be seen all at once; and he who sees one end should feel that, from the given data, he can arrive at no conclusion respecting the other, yet be impressed with a feeling of a universal energy, pervading with its beauty of unanimity all life and all inanimation, all forms of stillness or motion, all presence of silence or of sound.

256. Thus, then, we have reviewed the most interesting examples of existing villa architecture, and we have applied the principles derived from those examples to the landscape of our own country. Throughout, we have endeavoured to direct attention to the spirit, rather than to the letter, of all law, and to exhibit the beauty of that principle which is embodied in the line with which we have headed this concluding paper; of being satisfied with national and natural forms, and not endeavouring to introduce the imaginations, or imitate the customs, of foreign nations, or of former times. All imitation has its origin in vanity, and vanity is the bane of architecture.



And, as we take leave of them, we would, once for all, remind our English sons of Sempronius “qui villas attollunt marmore novas,” *novas* in the full sense of the word,—and who are setting all English feeling and all natural principles at defiance, that it is only the *bourgeois gentilhomme* who will wear his dressing-gown upside down, “parceque toutes les personnes de qualité portent les fleurs en en-bas.”

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## INDEX.

[*The References are to the numbered paragraphs of this edition.*]

- ABBEVILLE, 13.  
Aberystwith, 149.  
Academy, Royal, 5.  
All Souls' College, Oxford, 64.  
Alps, 40 seq., 103 note, 104 note, 219, 222 note, 224, 239.  
Altorf (canton Uri), Fig. 4.  
Andes, crystals, 224.  
Aosta, cottage near, 31 note.  
Apennines, 103 note, 138, 219.  
Apollo, statues of, 110.  
Arcade, of Italian cottage and Swiss towns, 30.  
Arch, in Italian villa, 122 ; in ideal English villa, 245.  
Architect, must be a metaphysician, 1 ; and a psychologist, 177.  
    His chief duty, 225 note.  
    His duty to his employer, 170, 176 seq., 216 seq.  
    His province, 166 ; should design garden and park, 112, 152, 212 ; must not experiment or imitate, 225.

- How misemployed, 7 ; often seems to believe the public to be shortsighted, 178.
- Amateur, 167 seq.
- Architecture, its dignity as a "science," 1 ; is more than mere building, 132 seqq.
- Poetry of, explained, 9, 36, 256.
- Not to be judged in the abstract, 141 ; no single *beau idéal*, 98, 147.
- Historical interest (the "Lamp of Memory" in *Seven Lamps*), 17, 35, 118, 130, 225 note.
- Rise in Egypt, &c., 149 note.
- Styles mentioned : Classical, 194, 201, 245 seqq. ; Dutch, 71, 193 ; Elizabethan, 153 seqq., 178, 203 seqq. ; Egyptian, 126 note, 149 note, 168 ; French, 15 seqq., 92, 110 ; German, 37, 71 ; Greek, 126, 149 note, 202, 225 note ; Gothic, 149 note, 203 ; Gothic revival, 179 note ; Italian, 22 seqq., 75, 106 seqq., 194 ; Modern English, 4 seqq. (and see below under *Fallacies*) ; Moorish, Moresco, 37, 74, 149 note ; Roman, 37, 129, 149 note, 199 ; Spanish, 28, 37, 73, 149 note.
- May copy, must not imitate, 225 note, 256.
- National character an important element, 2, 46, 98, 129 seq., 147 seqq., 225 note, 256 ; and see *National*.
- Conditioned by climate, 28, 35, 40 seqq., 55, 66, 110, 122, 145, 190, 246 : and by convenience, 29, 53, 56, 126, 130, 139, 218, though convenience is not its aim, 133 seq.
- Its effect on surrounding scenery, 6, 10, 42, 88 seqq., 174 seqq., 217 seqq. ; and the effect of scenery on it, 17, 27, 85 seqq., 110, 141, 248.

Some popular fallacies, 3, 7, 39, 101, 162, 166 seqq., 178, 203, 225 note.

Its principles to be derived from Nature, 53, 112, 155, 248, 250 seqq., see *Beau Idéal*, *Beauty*, *Character*, *Colour*, *Composition*, *Contrast*, *Copying*, *Cottage*, *Curvature*, *Decoration*, *Design*, *Dilapidation*, *Effect*, *Elevation*, *Elizabethan*, *Grotesque*, *Humours*, *Imitation*, *Magnitude*, *Neatness*, *Ornament*, *Outline*, *Proportion*, *Repetition*, *Rules*, *Severity*, *Shadow*, *Simplicity*, *Situation*, *Size*, *Taste*, *Unison*, *Unity*, *View*, *Villa*, *Volcanic Country*, *Water*, *White*.

Its Materials:—see *Brick*, *Composition*, *Log*, *Marble*, *Materials*, *Slate*, *Stone*, *Stucco*, *Tiling*, *Whitewash*, *Wood*.

Its Parts:—see *Arcade*, *Arch*, *Balustrade*, *Battlement*, *Breakfast-room*, *Buttress*, *Chimney*, *Door*, *Dormer*, *Flower-work*, *Gable*, *Gallery*, *Garret*, *Garden*, *Grotto*, *Leafage*, *Oriel*, *Pilasters*, *Pinnacles*, *Portico*, *Quoins*, *Rafters*, *Roof*, *Shop fronts*, *Statues*, *Terraces*, *Tower*, *Urns*, *Window*.

Examples:—see *All Souls'*, *Aosta*, *Brasenose*, *Burleigh*, *Charlton*, *Como*, *Coniston*, *Cordova*, *Fountains*, *Isola*, *John's*, *Kenilworth*, *Labyrinth*, *Madeleine*, *Mæcenas'*, *Malines*, *Melrose*, *Merton*, *Munich*, *Netherlands*, *Norman*, *Notre Dame*, *Oxford*, *Pæstum*, *Palmyra*, *Parthenon*, *Peterborough*, *Peter's*, *Petrarch*, *Pliny*, *Porro*, *Pozzuoli*, *Reale*, *Roslin*, *Sardinia*, *Schools*, *Tolbooth*, *Volcanic*, *Windermere*, *Windsor*.

- Architrave, 123.  
 Ariosto (busts), 110.  
 Arquà, 137.  
 Artist and scene-painter, the difference, 232 note.  
 Assimilation, law of composition, 230 seqq.  
 Ausonia (Italy), 103 note, 143.  
 Avalanches, two kinds, 104 note.  
 Avenues, 13, 151 seqq.
- BALUSTRADES, 110, 123, 125 seqq.  
 Battlement, barbarous in a villa, 207.  
 Beau idéal of architecture is visionary and non-existent, 98, 147.  
     of English character, 147  
     of chimney, 65.  
 Beauty must involve melancholy, 23, 119.  
     is sometimes "energy," 234.  
     opposed to prettiness, 52.  
     fallacious influence of association, 163.  
     line of, 238, 244.  
 Ben Venue, 222 note.  
 Bermondsey, 164.  
 Bernard, Convent of St., 104 note.  
 Berne, canton, 41, 44.  
 Bible quoted, see under *Quotations*.  
 Blue or Cultivated Country, 91, 182 seqq.  
 Bog-oak originally in rows, 152.  
 Bonatti, Guido, 146.  
 Borromean islands, 215 ; and see *Isola Bella*.  
 Bossons, glacier des, 222 note.  
 Boulevard des Italiens, 213.  
 Bourgeois gentilhomme, 256.

- Brasenose College, Oxford, 154 note.  
 Breakfast room should have view, 227.  
 Brenta, river, 123.  
 Brevent, mt., 222 note.  
 Brick, its character, use, colour, &c., 185-195.  
 Brighton, 149.  
 Brown or Hill Country, 93, 213 seqq.  
 Burleigh House, 61, 154 note.  
 Buttress, use in volcanic districts, 138 seqq.
- CADENABBIA, 113 note.  
 Cader Idris, 222 note.  
 Calabria, 138.  
 Caldbeck Fells, 184.  
 Callcott, Sir Augustus, 5.  
 Campione, mt., 113 note.  
 Candidus (contributor to "Architectural Magazine"),  
     178.  
 Canning and the French Refugee, 235.  
 Capo di Monte, 139.  
 Caravaggio, 193.  
 Carlsruhe, 151 note.  
 Carrara, quarries, 113.  
 Carving, see *Flower-work, Leafage, Ornament*.  
 Châlet, 40 seqq.  
 Character, national, shown in Architecture, 14 seqq.,  
     27 seqq., 32 seqq., 147, 166, 237. Individual,  
     in windows, 180; to be consulted by architect,  
     177.  
     Of peasants and gentlefolk compared, 97, 102;  
     of English and Continentals compared, 58,  
     66; of English and French peasantry, 18;

- of Italians, 35, 145 seq.; of Englishmen, 15 seqq., 156, 188 seq., 225 note; beau idéal of English, 147. Ancient nations, 149 note.
- Of modern imitators, 225 note.
- Of Italian cottage, 28 seqq.; and villa, 106 seqq.
- Of English mountain cottage, 48 seqq., 59; Elizabethan villa, 156; and brick house, 188 seq.; of English architecture, generally colourless, 148. Of ideal villa, 245 seqq.
- Landscape, Italian, 23 seqq., 94, 103 seqq., 236; Greek, 199; English woody or green country, 85 seqq.; blue country, 183 seqq., 196 seqq.; hill country, 47 seqq. (and see *Scenery*).
- Charlton, Kent, old house, 154 note.
- Château, 17.
- Chimneys, 61 seqq., 137.
- Classical style may be adapted to certain kinds of English scenery, 201 seq.; but must not be in brick, 194; nor used in the ideal mountain villa, 245 seqq.
- Claude Lorrain, 143.
- Climate influencing architecture, 28, 35, 40 seqq., 55, 66, 110, 122, 145, 190, 246.
- Coll' Alto, near Siena, 146.
- Cologne, the Three Kings, 64.
- Colour, of Swiss cottage, 42, 236; of English mountain cottage, 49 seqq.; of Italian villa, 113 seqq.; of English cottages in various scenery, 90 seqq.; of ideal mountain villa, 253 seq. of brick, 186 seqq., 202 note,



- When and where is white permissible, 114  
seqq.  
Rawness explained, 202 note.  
Rules of contrast, &c., 232.
- Como, Lake, 102 seqq., 113 seqq., 215, 222, 241.
- Composition, artistic as applied to Architecture; principles of contrast, &c., 230 seqq.; connection with surroundings, 109, 209, 253; breadth, 48; curvature, 143 seq., 236, 244 seqq.; proportion to surroundings, 221 seqq.; proportion of parts, 244; in design of detail, 179, 251 seq.  
Illustrated in chimneys, 67; in Italian villa, 125, 136.  
and see *Design*.
- Composition (building material), 113, 190.
- Coniston Hall, 69.
- Contrast, principles; 230 seqq.; in painting, 232; poetry, 233; and character, 235.
- Convenience not the aim of Architecture, 133 seq.; though conditioning it, 29, 53, 126, 130, 139, 218.
- Copying ancient monuments better than restoring or imitating them, 225 note.
- Cordova, 74.
- Cottage, Part I. *passim*; English lowland, 12; English mountain, 47 seqq., 105; French, 13 seqq.; Italian, 22 seqq.; Swiss, 40 seqq.  
Chimneys, 69, 77.  
and villa compared, 105.  
Rules for building, 82 seqq.
- Cultivated or blue country, 91, 182 seqq.
- Cumberland, 51, 67, 184, 224.
- Curvature, as guide to design, 143 seq 236 244 seqq.

- DANTE quoted, see *Quotations*.  
 Decoration, meaning of the word, 251 : see *Ornament*.  
 Degree and duration of effect, 231 seqq.  
 Derwentwater, 3.  
 Design in Architecture, 109 ; of ornament, 179.  
     of villa, 122 seqq., 136 seqq., 168, 176 seqq.,  
     243 seqq.  
     and see *Composition*.  
 Diana, statues of, 110.  
 Dilapidation of French cottage, 17 seq. ; of Italian,  
     35.  
     not permissible in villa, 119, 128.  
 Display loved by the English, 150, 228.  
 Door, of cottage, 13, 52 ; of villa, 123.  
 Doric temple, 126.  
 Dormer windows, 154 ; and see *Garret*.  
 Duration and degree of effect, 231 seqq.  
 Dutch architecture, 193.
- ECONOMY often fallacious, 249, 252.  
 Edge of contrast should be soft, 239.  
 Effect, how obtained, 230 seqq.  
 Egerian grottoes, 25.  
 Egyptian architecture, 126 note, 149 note, 168.  
 Elegance of Italian cottage, 34.  
 Elevation of character, 73 note, 128, 237.  
 Elizabethan architecture, 153 seqq., 178, 203 seqq.  
 Energy a source of beauty, 234, 238.  
 English characteristics, 14 seqq., 58, 66, 147, 150, 188  
     seq., 225 note, 228.  
     Scenery, 12, 47 seqq., 58, 183 seqq., 196  
     seqq.

cottage, 12 ; mountain cottage, 47 seqq., 105.  
 Villa, at Windermere, 101 ; lowland, 147  
 seqq. ; suburban, 183 ; Elizabethan, 155  
 seqq.

Eridanus (river Po), 25.

Etna, 139.

Euganean hills, 103 note.

Eustace on gardening, 112.

FALMOUTH, 149.

Florence, 138.

Flower-work (sculptured ornament), 154, 179, 206,  
 250 seqq.

garden, 209 seq.

Fluted columns, 154.

Forest scenery, see *Green Country*.

Form of villa, see *Design*.

Fountains Abbey, 168.

French character, 13, 17 seqq., 130, 235.

landscape, 15 seqq., 92.

cottage, 13 seqq. ; and garden, 13 seqq. (see  
*Abbeville, Paris*).

GABLE, 32, 37, 207.

Gallery, of Italian cottage, 29 ; of Swiss, 41.

of Royal Academy and Watercolour Society, 5.

Garden, of cottage, 12 ; of Italian villa, 108 seqq.,  
 135.

design of, 208 seqq.

Garret windows, 245 ; and see *Dormer*.

Geneva, 215.

- Geology of Lake District, 51 ; of Lake of Como, 113  
and note ; of South Italy, 139 ; of England,  
149.
- German architecture, 37, 71.
- Glasgow, 149, 193.
- Gothard, quartz of St., 224.
- Gothic school of architecture, 149 note, 203, 206 ;  
pseudo Gothic, 179 note.  
style, sometimes ill adapted to modern require-  
ments, 203 ; as in the case of chimneys, 61,  
64 ; sometimes well adapted, 71.
- Grace of picturesque "blue" country, 196.
- Greek architecture, 126, 149 note, 225 note ; roofs,  
126, 202 : and see *Classical*.  
scenery and English compared, 199.
- Green or Woody Country, 85 seqq., 204 seqq.
- Grey or Wild Country, 92.
- Grotesque, French, 18 ; Swiss, 41.  
desirable in forest country, 88, 206.  
hints for, 206.
- Grotto, "Egerian," 25 ; of Italian villa, 107 seq.,  
113.
- HELVELLYN, 54.
- Helvetia, 38 ; and see *Swiss*.
- Herodotus quoted, see under *Quotations*.
- Highlands of Scotland, unsuitable to villa, 219, 226.
- Hill or Brown Country, 93.
- Historical interest of architecture, 17, 35, 118, 130,  
225 note ; not desirable in the case of a  
villa, 118.  
interest of woody country, 86 seq.

Humility wanting in Swiss cottage, 42 ; present in English mountain cottage, 50, 56, 220.

Humours of nature, 22 ; of character not to be illustrated in architecture, 165 seqq., 225 note.

IMITATION in architecture, opposed to copying, 225 note, 256.

Ireland, bog-oak, 152.

Isola Bella (Lago Maggiore), 110, 123 ; and see *Borromean*.

Italian scenery, 23 seqq., 94, 103 seqq., 236.

cottage, 28 seqq. ; chimneys, 75 ; villa, 106 seqq. character, 35, 145 seq.

JOHN Bull, 7.

John's, St., Coll. Oxford, 154 note.

Jungfrau, mt., 224.

Jura, mts., 38.

Juvenal, see under *Quotations*.

KENILWORTH Castle, 168.

Kirkstone pass (Westmoreland), 57.

LABOUR the source of happiness, 163.

Labyrinth of the 12 Kings, 126 note.

La Haye Sainte (Waterloo), 217.

Lake effects, 114 seqq., (and see *Borromean*, *Como*, *Derwentwater*, *Lecco*, *Leman*, *Loch Katrine*, *Loch Lomond*, *Maggiore*, *Thun*, *Vevay*, *Windermere*.)

- Lancashire, 67, 184.  
 Landscape, see *Scenery*.  
 Larian Lake (Como), 25, 103 seqq., 129.  
 Leafage, ornament, 179 note, 249 seqq.; and see  
*Flower-work*.  
 Lecco, lake, 106, 113 note.  
 Lemán, lake (of Geneva), 215.  
 Lewis, John F., R. A., 5.  
 Lichen geographicus, 53.  
 Lincoln green, 152.  
 Loch Katrine, 217.  
 Loch Lomond, 254.  
 Log work of Swiss cottage, 40 seq.  
 Lombardy, 103 note, 238.
- MADELEINE, church of La (Paris), 225 note.  
 Mæcenas' villa (Tivoli), 137.  
 Maggiore, Lago, 110, 215.  
 Magi at Cologne, 64.  
 Magnitude, apparent and real, 222.  
     how to suggest, 221 seqq.  
     of details, proportioned to whole, 224.  
 Malines, 71.  
 Malvern, 91.  
 Marble, 113, 121, 127, 254.  
 Materials for building, Swiss, 40; English, 51 seqq.,  
     185 seqq., 254; Italian, 113, 121; Dutch,  
     193.  
     those furnished by Nature the best, 53, 155,  
     254.  
     see also *Brick, Composition, Log, Marble, Slate,*  
     *Stone, Stucco, Tiling, Whitewash, Wood.*

- Melancholy an element in beauty, 23, 119.  
 Melrose, 179 note.  
 Mendips (hills), 224 note.  
 Merton College, Oxford, 154 note.  
 Messina, 103 note.  
 Metaphysician, architect must be, 1.  
 Michael Angelo, 7.  
 Mont Blanc, 224 note.  
 Moorish, Moresco, architecture, 37, 74, 149 note.  
 Mountain Scenery, 38 seqq., 47 seqq., 103 seq.,  
 200, 214 seq., 222, 237 seqq.; and see *Alps*,  
*Apennines*, *Avalanches*, *Ben Venue*, *Bernard*,  
*Berne*, *Bossons*, *Brevent*, *Brown*, *Cader*, *Cumber-*  
*land*, *Etna*, *Euganean*, *Helvellyn*, *Highlands*,  
*Jungfrau*, *Jura*, *Kirkstone*, *Mont Blanc*, *Novo*,  
*Plains*, *Rütli*, *Scawfell*, *Skiddaw*, *Snowdon*,  
*Vesuvius*.  
 Munich, windows, 180 ; picture gallery, 193.  
 Mystery of the picturesque "blue" country, 197.
- NAPLES, 138 seq.
- National character shown in architecture, 14 seqq.,  
 27 seqq., 32 seqq., 147, 166, 237 : its impor-  
 tance, 2, 46, 98, 129 seq., 225 note, 256.  
 of English and Continentals, 58, 66 ; of English  
 and French peasantry, 18 ; of Italians, 35,  
 145 seq. ; of Englishmen, 15 seqq., 147, 156,  
 188 seq., 225 note ; of Egyptian, 149 note ;  
 of Roman, 149 note.  
 and see *Character*.  
 dances, 100.
- National Gallery, 3, 225 note.

- Nature the guide to architecture, 53, 112, 155, 248, 250 seqq. ; and see *Scenery*.
- Neatness of English cottage, 12 seqq. ; Swiss, 42.  
 undesirable in forest scenery, 88 ; and among mountains, 254.
- Nemi, lake, 25.
- Netherlands, chimneys, 71 ; and see *Dutch*.
- Newcastle, 149.
- Nonchalance of French cottage, 13.
- Norman village, 37.
- Notre Dame, Paris, 100.
- Novo, Monte del (Como) 113 note.

ORESTES, 126.

Oriel windows, 154, 205.

Ornament of French cottage, 18 ; Italian, 32 ; Swiss, 45 ; English, 39 ; of Greek architecture, 124 ; of Elizabethan, 154, 205 seqq.

Nature's teaching, 250.

difficulty of designing, 179 ; rules for, 249 seqq.

right placing of, 64, 250.

must not be delicate in brick work, 194.

should be in marble, 254.

see also *Flower-work*, *Leafage*, *Statues*, *Urns*.

Oxford, 64, 154 note.

Outline of English mountain cottage, 54 ; woodland house, 89 ; of ideal villa, 143 seq, 201, 241 seqq.

PÆSTUM, 162.



- Painters in Watercolours, Society, 5.  
 Painting in England in 1837, 4 seq.  
     taste in landscape, 143.  
     rules of contrast, &c., 232.  
 Palestine, roofs, 126.  
 Palmyra, 162.  
 Paris, 213, see also *Madeleine, Notre Dame*.  
 Parisian guinguette, 100.  
 Park scenery, 94, 152 seqq.  
 Parthenon, 42, 225 note.  
 Pausanias, King of Sparta, 126.  
 Peasantry compared with gentlefolk, 97.  
     of England and France, 18 ; Italy, 29 ; Switzerland, 40 seqq.  
 Penseroso, Milton's, 23.  
 Perdiccas, 60.  
 Peterborough, 238.  
 Peter's, St. (Rome), 42, 222.  
 Petersham, 153.  
 Petrarch's Villa, 137.  
 Pilasters, 122 seq., 136.  
 Pinnacles, 45, 249.  
 Plains of Italy, 103 note.  
 Plataea, 126.  
 Pliny's Villa, Como, 216.  
 Poetry of architecture explained, 9, 36, 256.  
 Porro, villa (Como), 122 seq.  
 Portico, 154.  
 Poussin, Nicolas, 143.  
 Pozzuoli, 168.  
 Principles of architecture, see *Architecture, Colour, Composition, Cottage, Design, Nature, Ornament, Scenery, Villa*.

- Proportion of building to scenery, 221 seqq.  
 of parts, 244.  
 Prosperity, ill effects of, 35.

QUARTZ of Snowdon and St. Gothard, 224.

Quoins, 193.

Quotations and allusions :—

- Anonymous (poem by the author) "Deep within  
 its azure rest," &c., 116.  
 Aristotle, Ethics, "*ὑπάρχουσαν φύσιν*," 99.  
 Ballad, "Doublets of Lincoln green," 152.  
 Bible : Isaiah xiii., 21, "Satyr shall dance there,"  
 47.  
 — Luke v. 19, oriental roof, 126.  
 Dante ; Inferno, xx., 118, Guido Bonatti, 146  
 note.  
 — Inferno, xxxiii., Ugolino, 146 note.  
 — Purgatorio, xiii., 100-154, Sapia, 146  
 note.  
 Euripides, Iphigenia Taurica, 113, Orestes and  
 triglyphs, 126.  
 Eustace on gardening, 112.  
 French saying of John Bull, 188.  
 Herodotus, II., 148, Egyptian Labyrinth, 126  
 note.  
 — III., 6, Earthenware, 126 note.  
 — III., 12, Egyptian crania, 149 note.  
 — VIII., 137, Perdiccas, 60.  
 Juvenal, XIV., 95, "novas attollit marmore villas,"  
 256.  
 — XIV., 179, "vivite contenti . . . collibus  
 istis," 213.

- Juvenal, XIV., 321, "Nunquam aliud Natura,"  
&c., 82.
- Milton, *Il Penseroso*, "most musical," &c., 22.
- Molière, *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, 256.
- Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, "A plague o'  
both your houses," 233.
- Hamlet, I. 3, "Horrible, most hor-  
rible," 121.
- Hamlet, II. 2, Method in madness,  
108.
- Hamlet, "There's rosemary," &c.,  
211 note.
- Hamlet, the Gravediggers, 233.
- Lear, the Fool; and Macbeth, the  
Porter, 233.
- Shelley, *Cenci*, II., 1, "The house is penetrated,"  
&c., 145 note.
- Sensitive Plant, stanza 6, "The lily of  
the vale," 211 note.
- Thucydides, II., 4, Thebans at Plataea, 126.
- IV., 48, Massacre of Corcyra, 126.

RAFTERS, 37.

Ranz des Vaches, 43.

Reale, Villa, 168.

Repetition in Composition, 238.

Respectability, English attribute, 188.

*Rhododendron ferrugineum* (Alp-rose), 211.

Richmond Hill, 85, 153.

Romans (ancient), their influence in Architecture, 37,  
129, 149 note, 199.

Roof of Italian cottage, 28; villa, 122, 126.

- Roof of Norman village, 37 ; Swiss, 41, 43, 89.  
 of English mountain cottage, 52.  
 of Eastern and Greek house, 126, 202.  
 hints to determine pitch, 89, 243 ; colour, 254 ;  
 material, 254.
- Roslin chapel, 168 note, 179 note.
- Rouen, 13.
- Royal Academy, 5.
- Rubens, landscape, 193.
- Rue la Paix, Paris, 213.
- Rules ; which are to be obeyed when they clash,  
 240.  
 for composition, colour, &c. See under those  
 words.
- Rütli (Lake of Lucerne), 217.
- SALVATOR Rosa, 143.
- Sardinia, capital of (Turin), 194.
- Satyr (Isaiah xiii. 21), 47.
- Scawfell, 51, 54.
- Scenery in its relation to Architecture, 10, 173 seqq.,  
 221 seqq.  
 its influence on mankind, 174, 214, 248.  
 of North France, 20 ; of Italy, 22 seqq., 33,  
 103 seqq., 114 ; of Switzerland, 38 seqq. ; of  
 English Lakes, 47 seqq., 223 ; of English  
 woodland, 155.  
 Four kinds, "Blue, green, grey and brown,"  
 85 seqq.  
 Dependent on geology, 149.  
 see also *Lakes, Mountains*.
- Schools (old) at Oxford, 154 note.

- Schools of architecture, see under *Architecture*.
- Sempronius (Juvenal, XIV. 95), 256.
- Sensuality of English picturesque "blue" country, 198 seq.
- Severity of English mountain cottage, 55.
- Shadow important in architectural design, 28, 121, 180 note, 250.
- Shakespeare, see under *Quotations*.
- Shelley, see under *Quotations*.
- Shop fronts, 162.
- Sicily, 138.
- Simplicity of Italian cottage, 32 ; villa, 137, 237 ; of English villa, 203.
- Situation of villa, 104 seqq., 215 seqq., 223, 226.
- Size of ideal villa, 223 seqq.
- Slate roofs, 90.
- Skiddaw, 54, 222 note, 224.
- Smoke, effect in landscape, 62, 183.
- Snowdon, 224.
- Snug, truly English word, 14.
- Solitude, effect of, 47 seq., 242.
- Somma Riva, villa (Carlotta), 107, 123.
- Spanish architecture, 28, 37, 73.
- Squire — (typical villa owner), 148, 168.
- Staffa, 162.
- Statues as architectural accessories, 108, 110, 125 seqq., 153.
- Stirling, 184, 190.
- Stone for building, 51, 113, 254 : and see *Marble, Quoin, Slate, Tiling*.  
character in, 54.
- Strachino, 162.
- Strasburg, 238.

- Stucco, 121 seq., 128.
- Swiss cottages, real and sham, 38 seqq., 188 note.  
 chimneys, 70 seq.  
 see also *Alps, Scenery*.
- TASTE, its nature, 6 seqq., 21 ; origin, 163 seq.  
 wanting in England, 59, 79.  
 of Italians, 34 ; Swiss, 46.  
 in landscape painting, 143.
- Taylor, Frederick, 5.
- Tell, William, 43.
- Terraces, 107, 122, 135, 209.
- Thames, 153.
- Thucydides, see under *Quotations*.
- Thun, lake, 241.
- Tiber, 25, 199.
- Tiling materials, 126, 202, 254.
- Tivoli, 137.
- Tolbooth of Glasgow, 193.
- Tower of Italian cottage, 31 ; villa, 136 seq.
- Tragedy, its source, 119.
- Trees of villa gardens, 109 seqq., 208 seqq., 253 ; see  
 also *Avenue, Garden, Park*.
- Triglyphs, 126.
- Turk, national character, 100.
- Turner, J. M. W., 5.
- Tuscan columns for chimneys, 61.
- Tyrolese dance, 100 ; architecture, 225 note.
- UGOLINO (Dante), 146.
- Unison, Unity of feeling, 8 seq., 22, 168.  
 of effect, 205, 255.

Unterseen (Switzerland), 44.  
 Uri (canton), 41.  
 Urns as ornaments, 108, 148.

VENICE, 62, 75, 103 note.

Vesuvius, 139.

Vevay, 215.

View needed from breakfast room, 227 : what sort, 228.  
 see *Scenery*.

Villa, Part II. *passim*.

types :—of Windermere, 101 ; Como, 102 seqq ;  
 of English, lowlands, 147 seqq. ; metropolitan,  
 148 ; suburban, 183 ; Elizabethan, 155 seqq.,  
 204 seqq.

the cottage-villa, 225.

examples :—Villa Serbelloni, 106 ; Somma-Riva  
 (Carlotta), 107, 123 ; of Petrarch, 137 ; of  
 Mæcenas, 137 ; Reale, 168.

principles :—intention or purpose, 118, 129 ;  
 native to Italy, 129 ; but natural in any pic-  
 turesque "blue" country, 199.

Right situation, 104 seqq., 215 seqq., 223, 226.

Proportion to scenery, 224 seq.

Form, 107 seqq., 122 seqq.

Design of ideal, 241 seqq.

Virgil (busts), 110.

Volcanic country, 139 seq.

WALES, 57, 219, 226.

Walton, Isaak, 43.

Water, effect of surface, 114 seqq.

- Watercolours, Society of Painters in, 5.  
 Waverley, author of, 219.  
 Westmoreland, 47 seqq., 93, 254.  
 Whee-whaw-kantamaraw, 168.  
 White, use in landscape effect, 114 seqq., 252.  
 Whitewash, 41, 59, 90 seqq.  
 Wild or Grey Country, 92.  
 Wilkie, Sir David, 5.  
 Windermere villas, 101, 188 note, 254.  
 Window of Italian cottage, 28 seq.; Swiss, 41; English, 52.  
     of Italian villa, 123, 137. Three characteristic types, 180  
     of ideal villa, 245.  
     of breakfast room should command view, 227.  
 Windsor, long walk, 152.  
 Winkelried, Arnold von, 43.  
 Wood as building material, 40, 90, 155.  
 Woody or Green Country, 85 seqq., 152, 204 seqq.
- YARMOUTH, 149.  
 Yorkshire, 184.













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